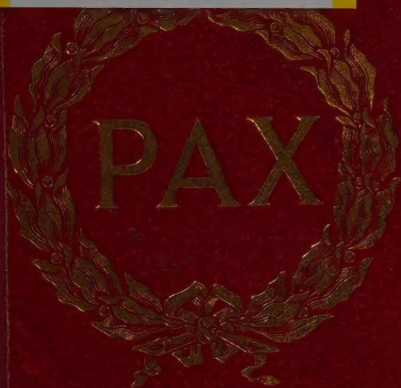


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BENEDICTINE MARTYR IN ENGLAND

BEING THE

LIFE AND TIMES OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD

DOM JOHN ROBERTS, O.S.B.

By

DOM BEDE CAMM, O.S.B., B.A.

PRIEST OF ST THOMAS'S ABBEY, ELDINGTON; OF THE CONGREGATION OF BEURON

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TO ALL THE CHILDREN OF
SAINT BENEDICT
WHO IN THIS LAND ARE REAPING THE HARVEST
SOWN BY AUGUSTINE
AND WATERED BY THE BLOOD OF OUR MARTYRS
THIS WORK IS AFFECTIONATELY

Dedicated

BY THE MOST UNWORTHY OF THEIR BRETHREN

PREFACE

To undertake to write the life of a martyr would be presumption, unless it were, as this is, a task imposed by obedience. Yet, though the work has cost me no little labour, it has truly been a labour of love. An Oxford convert, who had been drawn to the monastic life in a foreign country, where he had gained the Faith, who had left England for a few weeks a Protestant tourist, to return after some years a priest and a monk, would naturally feel devotion to one who had so closely preceded him on the same path. Coincidences such as these—and they could be multiplied, had I not already yielded sufficiently to egotism—may explain my enthusiasm for my subject, and excuse, I hope, in part a discursiveness which cannot entirely be defended. If the reader will take the trouble to consult his “Chaloner,” he will see in how very few pages is

comprised all, or about all, that has hitherto been known of the life of my hero. The British Museum, and Record Office, the archives of the Diocese of Westminster, of the Old Brotherhood, of the English College at Valladolid, and of Monte Cassino, and the Abbey of Silos in Spain, have been ransacked to swell this scanty material. Much has been found, though much has no doubt escaped me. The French Revolution scattered and destroyed the archives at Douay, while those of St Martin's Compostella disappeared during the troubles of 1836. Much is thus lost for ever, though doubtless a persevering search in the libraries and archives of some Spanish and Flemish towns would yet reveal many treasures which have escaped the ravages of modern barbarians. Monastic duties have rendered such personal search impossible; what I have been able to do is indeed little enough, but I have met with the most generous assistance from others. It is no exaggeration to say that my work could never have been done without their help. To one old friend above all (I mean Mr Edmund Bishop), I owe more than I can adequately express. Among the others, I have especially to thank the Benedictine

Abbots of San Julian de Samos and San Domingo de Silos; the Right Rev. Mgr. Allen, Rector of the English College, Valladolid, who has been unwearied in his replies to my questions; and Don Fausto Curiel y Gutierrez, O.S.B., of the Abbey of Montserrat, who has constantly and most kindly placed at my disposal his unrivalled knowledge of the history of the old Spanish congregation of our Order. Nearer home, I am under great obligations to Dom Gilbert Dolan, O.S.B., of St Gregory's, Downside; to Father John Pollen, S.J.; to Mr W. Phillips, of Chester; to Mr Hobson Matthews, of Cardiff; to the Rev. Lacy Rumsey, Vicar of Llanstadwell; and last, but not least, to my friend Mr Henry Worth, who has given me the most generous and unwearied assistance in copying from MSS. and rare printed books. I have also to thank His Eminence Cardinal Vaughan for permission to search the Westminster Archives, and the Reverend Father Stanton, of the London Oratory, for his courteous assistance in that task; while to the kind permission of the Lord Bishop of Birmingham I owe much valuable matter found in the Library of St Mary's College, Oscott.

The substance of these chapters has, it must

be noted, already appeared in French, in the pages of the *Revue Benedictine* of the Abbey of Maredsous. They have been considerably revised since then, and to a great extent rewritten. Still the fact that I was writing in the first place for foreign readers may serve, I hope, to excuse me, if here and there I have dwelt on general features of the persecution already well known to English Catholics. I found indeed that it was impossible to separate my hero from the history of his times, but now and again I have perhaps laid myself open to the reproach of telling a twice-told tale.

In this centenary year of the coming of our Apostle St Augustine, our thoughts are naturally turned more than ever to the great work of the conversion of England. The life of one who was considered by his contemporaries "a second Augustine monk" may have its interests and its lessons for us all. That it may, in ever so slight a measure, help on that glorious work of the re-conversion of our country, has been the author's constant prayer, his single aim. If it teach but one soul to love our martyrs better, he is more than rewarded. Of such a one, however, he would beg the charity of a prayer for his many needs.

It only remains to protest, in accordance with the decree of Urban VIII., that the title of martyr and the supernatural occurrences ascribed to these venerable servants of God rests merely on human authority, and that it is in no sense meant to anticipate the infallible judgment of the Holy Apostolic See, which alone is competent to decide in these questions. Everything here written is submitted absolutely to the authority of the Church, whose obedient son it is the writer's greatest joy and consolation ever to profess himself.

ST THOMAS'S ABBEY, ERDINGTON,

Feast of St Placid, Protomartyr O.S.B.,

October 5, 1897.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS.

*"Hujus alumnorum numero glomeramus ovantes
Quos gerit in gremio fœcunda Britannia cives,
A quo jam nobis baptismi gratia fluxit,
Atque magistrorum veneranda caterva cucurrit."*

ST ALDHELM of Sherborne tells us in the lines quoted above that it was to St Benedict and his children that England owed the grace of baptism. It was indeed the great monastic Patriarch, who, in the persons of his sons Gregory and Augustine, begot this people to the Faith. And those sons had ever since held the principal strongholds of Christianity in England till the sad days of the sixteenth century, when they beheld their stately homes destroyed, and themselves a prey to the cruel persecution of a headstrong and avaricious king. This indeed was but the prelude to a spiritual ruin far more widespread and more terrible, even to the destruction of the ancient and venerable Church which the labours of the Benedictines had built up. But they did not despair. Though all seemed lost for the time, hope never died out in their hearts, and as a reward for this faith and loyalty of the monks, it was decreed by Divine Providence that their ancient stock should yet remain in the land. *Succisa virescit* is a device which the Order has ever verified in history, and never more notably than in England. Never for a day through

all the bitter years of persecution did our country fail to shelter in her bosom at least one Benedictine monk.

We are about to sketch the life of one, who, in the words of an old chronicler,* "was the first who out of a monastery, after the suppression of monasteries in England, attacked the gate of hell, and provoked the prince of darkness in his usurped kingdom, which he overcame, like his great Master, the Prince of martyrs, by losing his life in the conflict." Other monks had indeed laid down their lives for Christ and His Vicar in the days of Henry Tudor; but our hero was the first professed monk to suffer for the Faith in England since the nation's second apostasy under Elizabeth. He was the pioneer and the proto-martyr of the Benedictine revival, sealing the success of the movement in his blood, and by his death even more than by his life securing the permanence among us of the monastic life, and the continuity of the venerable English Congregation of our Order.

John Roberts was born, according to all authorities, in the county of Merioneth, in Wales, during the reign of Elizabeth.

There has been great obscurity until now about his early years. Bishop Challoner, our great authority on the martyrs, suggests† that he may be identical with a Cambridge student who came to a seminary at Rheims in 1583, was there received into the Church, and sent on to the English College at Rome. He is mentioned by

* Dom Bennet Weldon, "Chronological Notes of the English Benedictine Congregation," p. 76 (new edition, 1881).

† For this case of mistaken identity, see Challoner, "Memoirs of Missionary Priests" (Derby, T. Richardson & Son, 1843), vol. ii. p. 67; Pollen, "Acts of English Martyrs" (Burns & Oates, 1891), p. 143; Foley, "Pilgrim Book of the English College at Rome," p. 161. Foley says Challoner must be wrong in asserting that John Roberts was born in Merionethshire. But it is Foley himself who is in error.

Cardinal Allen, and by Dr Barrett (one of the Rheims Professors and afterwards President) in letters to the Superior of the English College, at Rome, as well as in the "Douai Diaries."

Brother Foley, in his "Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus," confidently asserts that this student was identical with the martyr; and though Father Pollen, in his "Acts of the English Martyrs," suggests doubts on the point, the matter has never been cleared up till now.

As a matter of fact, they were entirely different people, and have nothing in common but the name.

The Cambridge student, as we learn from the register of Caius College, Cambridge, was the son of Laurence Roberts of Kilmarsh, in Northamptonshire, and was admitted to the College in 1576. He came to Rheims, as we have said, in March 1583, in company with a priest named Edward Osborne, and after being received into the Church, and confirmed by the Bishop of Soissons, was sent on to the Roman College with several companions in August of the same year. He stayed in Rome till after his ordination to the priesthood, which took place in 1587, and was then sent to Valladolid, in order to go from thence to England. This fact has led writers to confound him with the martyr, who was later on himself at Valladolid; but it is extraordinary that no one should have noticed that Brother Foley's own pages correct this error.

For we find it there recorded that in 1591* Father Persons, the famous Jesuit Superior of the English Mission, contrived by a clever ruse to introduce twelve

* Foley, "Collectanea," i. p. 64 (note). See, too, Morris, "Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers," Series I. (Father Blount and Scotney Castle).

priests into England, and among them was this very John Roberts. This is how it was managed. Father Persons applied to the Spanish Admiral to equip the priests as if they were sailors who had formed part of the expedition against Spain under the Earl of Essex, and having been taken prisoners, were now duly released, with permission to return to England. In this disguise they arrived off the shores of England, but before being permitted to land were taken off to Lord Howard of Effingham, the Lord High Admiral, to be examined. Fortunately they had all the details of the expedition at their fingers' ends, and were so adroit in their answers that they quite took in the Lord High Admiral, who permitted them all to land. Only one was discovered, and he (by name, John Brushford) was imprisoned in Wisbech Castle, and died there within a twelvemonth. One of these priests was the famous Father Blount, first Provincial of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, and it is to this circumstance doubtless that we owe the preservation of the story. The future martyr was a boy of fifteen, when his namesake landed in England. The latter was just twenty-nine.

We have not been able to trace further the career of this missionary, but possibly our readers will think we have already spent too much time in describing who our hero was not, before we begin to describe who he was. But the fact that the mystery has never been cleared up till now must be our excuse.*

* For further details as to the Cambridge John Roberts see "Records of the English Catholics," Part I. ("Douai Diaries"), London, Nutt, 1878, pp. 194, 196, 197, 330; and Part II. ("Letters and Memorials of Cardinal Allen"), p. 205; also Plowden's "Remarks on the Memoirs of Gregorio Panzani," p. 334, where he is quoted as supporting a petition, Nov. 8, 1598. Father Plowden also confounds him with the martyr.

Had the records of the College of Valladolid, however, been consulted, much would have been learnt as to who the martyr was, and this confusion would never have been made. The College still flourishes, and fortunately the invaluable Archives still remain intact. From them we have a brief but most satisfactory document, which gives concisely the early history of the martyr, and was evidently taken down from his own lips.

It is strange that not only this important document but also the life of the servant of God, written by the illustrious chronicler of the Benedictine Order, D. Antonio Yepes,* seems to be unknown to all who have written on the subject, except indeed (in its French translation) to Dom Weldon. The document at Valladolid is none other than the statement made by the martyr himself at his entry into the College, preserved in the *Liber primi examinis*, or register in which some account of each student was written on his admission to the Seminary.†

From this we learn that John Roberts was born at "Transweneth," in the county of Merionethshire, in the year 1575 or 1576. His parents were of gentle blood, and were Catholics at heart; but like so many in those days, they seem to have yielded to the persecution, and outwardly conformed to the new religion of the State.

Such people were known as "schismatics" by their more faithful brethren, to distinguish them from the

* "*Cronica Benedictina*" (Valladolid, 1613), anno 835, vol. iv. p. 58, col. 4, and following. D. Antonio Yepes must not be confounded with his contemporary, D. Diego Yepes, of the Order of St Jerome, Bishop of Tاراçona, and confessor to Philip II., to whose "*Historia particular de la persecucion in Inglaterra*" we shall have occasion to refer later on. The Bishop is principally known by his Life of S. Teresa.

† See p. 49.

“heretics” who were Protestants by inclination as well as by policy.

It was not easy at first to identify the martyr's birth-place, and it was not till we had consulted a learned Welsh antiquary that we found the key to the riddle. Yepes gives it as “Ransuenit,” which is even farther from the reality than the Valladolid form. Welsh names are difficult enough to English ears; but a Spaniard would naturally find them impossible. However, there is no doubt that “Ransuenit” and “Transweneth” are to be identified with the village of Trawsfynydd or Trawsvynydd in Merionethshire.*

This being ascertained, it became possible to trace the martyr's pedigree, and it is indeed gratifying to be able to identify, at least with strong probability, his parents and family. We find these in Lewis Dwnn's “Heraldic Visitations of Wales.”† The account of the family of John Roberts is dated 1588—that is to say, when the future martyr was a boy of twelve. From the pedigree it appears that his father, who bore the same name, was the second son of Robert ap Morys ab John ap Meredith ap Cynan ap Owen Gwynedd; and therefore a descendant of the ancient princes of North Wales. John Roberts, Esquire, of Llanvrothen and Trawsfynydd parishes, was the first of his family to adopt this surname. As is well known, the ancient

* The only difficulty is of course the substitution of *n* for *w*, but this may be due to a misreading of the manuscript; *w* is equivalent to *v*, and *th* is the English form of the Welsh *dd*.

† “Heraldic Visitations of Wales,” by Lewis Dwnn, edited by Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick (Llandoverly, 1846, 2 vols. 4to), vol. ii. p. 215. It will be evident that the pedigree fits in every respect with that of the martyr, who claimed to be of gentle blood and a descendant of the ancient princes of his country. Mr Edmund Bishop, who most kindly drew our attention to this pedigree, expresses himself as convinced of its really being that of the martyr's family, although we have no absolutely irresistible proof of it.

Welsh custom of calling a man by the Christian name of his father (*e.g.* John ap Richard = John, son of Richard) was universal till the sixteenth century; and when family names were adopted in the reign of Henry VIII., the Christian name of the father usually decided the future surname of the family. Thus our hero's father called himself Roberts, because his father's name had been Robert. His elder brother, Louis, however, took the name of Arnvyl. He lived at Parke, in Merionethshire. The mother of the future martyr was Anna, daughter of Paul Arderike (or ab Diricke), Esquire of Gildertar, who was a native, at least by his mother's side, of the duchy of Holstein. John had two brothers, Robert and William (the latter of whom was dead at the time of the Visitation), and four sisters, who all appear to have been older than he (for at least three of them were married), though he was the eldest son. Of the sisters, the second, Blanch, married Cadwallador Owen, Master of Arts, whose son, Richard Owen, the famous loyalist Vicar of Eltham, is stated by Wood* to have "had some lands of inheritance in the parish of Trawsfynydd," and so may have inherited the martyr's birthplace from his mother.

At the time the Heraldic Visitation was taken, the martyr's father was residing at Llanfrothen, but he seems to have changed his abode more than once. Llanfrothen is a small village not far from Portmadoc, and was at that time on the sea-coast. It is about nine miles from the village which gave the martyr birth.

His father, though a man of good family, was a merchant. This may account for the family connections with the duchy of Holstein, and if, as his son

* "Athen. Oxon." (new edition), iv. 84.

asserted, he was well disposed to the Catholic religion,* we cannot help suspecting that he is to be identified with a certain John Roberts, a merchant, who was accused together with others of helping the King of Spain with ships and provisions.

The paper in which his name is found is headed, "A note to certifie the names of those merchants who have furnished the King of Spain with all kinds of provision, to the great hurt of her majesty, and the utter undoing of her highnes' realme; if such abuse be not redressed." After some other merchants from Wales and Bristol have been mentioned, we find: "John Roberts merchant sithence that time, freighted and transported two ships for the same place [Jamounte in Spain], and with like commoditie to the value of 2000£, and the shipp called the *Lily*, was seized to the king's use, with four cast pieces and ten muskets."

It appears that the two ships were the *Daisy*, under the Master William Willson, and the *Lily*, under the Master Alexander Sewater, and that they bore a cargo of provisions, powder, and lead. But as we said, we have no sure ground for identifying this merchant with the father of our hero. All we know for certain about him is, that he was a gentleman of good lineage,† engaged in commerce.

* It must not be inferred from this that there is any truth in the old Protestant contention that to be a Catholic in the time of Elizabeth was equivalent to being a traitor. John Roberts was not a Catholic, though no doubt he was one at heart. As to the general loyalty of the Catholic body, we may quote the latest Anglican historian: "From first to last their loyalty to the Crown, save for the few years of Jacobite intrigue, has been as conspicuous in England, in spite of much provocation, as the want of it has been remarkable in Ireland."—"History of the Church of England," by H. O. Wakeman, M.A. (Rivington, 1896), p. 346.

† The arms borne by John Roberts were "the coat of Griffith, the son of Cynan—that is, gules three lions passant argent, although the arms

The parish of Trawsvynydd in which he was living at the time of the martyr's birth is situated in the hundred of Ardudwy, in the county of Merioneth, in North Wales, about twelve miles north of Dolgelly.* At present it contains some fourteen hundred inhabitants. The village is perched on an eminence in the midst of a mountainous and rugged district, whose bleak and savage grandeur makes a powerful impression upon the mind. The parish itself is vast, being more than ten miles in length and eight in breadth, and the inhabitants who do not live in the village, are scattered thinly over the desolate moorland and barren hills, which scarce give pasture to a few sheep and young cattle. The country is one strangely calculated to inspire a young and romantic spirit. Not only does it boast of wild and rugged mountain scenery, but every now and then the traveller lights upon some lovely valley of soft rural beauty, where the cattle stand knee-deep in rich pasture,

usually borne by the descendants of that Welsh prince are those of his son Owen Gwynedd, viz. vert, three eagles displayed in fess, or. He bore these arms impaled with those of his wife, Anna Ardericke, azure, a garb, or. The crest was a lion [able?] passant, holding in his paw an instrument described as a *pentan*. This means a fire-back or hob, but it would seem that it is a misprint either for *pintan*, a fire-dart, or for *pentewyn*, a fire-brand." It must be noted that Lewis Dwnn's work is full of misprints, and must be used with caution.

The house in which the martyr was born is possibly that known as Rhiwgoch, situated about an hour's walk from Trawsfynydd, on the slope of the Pen y Stryd mountain. This is a very old edifice, and though an inscription over the porch shows it was built in 1610 by R. Lloyd, some parts are certainly older than this. In the last century it belonged to a family called Roberts, eight of whom are buried in Trawsvynydd Church, but it is not probable that they were connected with the martyr. The church is said to be one of the oldest in Wales, but it has been so much patched and modernised that it has lost most of its interest.

* See "Topographical Dictionary of Wales," by Samuel Lewis (S. Lewis and Co., London, 1838). "Trawsvynydd" is interpreted to mean "Parochia transmontana." The patron of the little Gothic church, which still exists, was St Madryn, a Welsh saint, whose feast was observed on June 9.

and a babbling brook calls to him to rest awhile beneath the pleasant shade of the trees. But the finest features of the landscape are two noble waterfalls, which attract many a visitor to this lonely spot, and the great lake of Llyn Rathlyn, whose broad expanse of silver waters abounds in strange, uncanny fish, the wonder of the angler and the naturalist.*

Nor are there wanting attractions which appeal to the archæologist and historian. John Roberts during his boyish years must often have climbed about among the ruins of the ancient Roman fortress,† which still hangs menacingly over a mountain pass hard by Trawsvynydd. Its huge stones, hastily piled together without cement, and its hidden stores of ancient coins and funeral urns, which repay the searcher after treasure-trove, would draw his youthful feet irresistibly thither. He would doubtless, too, explore the ancient Roman road, known as "Sawn Helen,"‡ with its sepulchral tumuli, like the mounds which line the Appian Way at Rome, and muse over the "Bedd Porus,"§ the long flat slab with its rudely carved inscription (an inscription which doubtless puzzled him, as it still does the Welsh antiquaries), "*Porus hic in tumulo jacet, homo pianus fuit.*" What legends clustered round those strange old tombs, and relics of a long vanished civilisation! What weird tales of the great giant Idris, who once ruled over the land, and whose lofty monolith still stood upright, amid the ruins of later

* A species of perch, with the lower extremity of the backbone strangely distorted. It seems to be peculiar to this lake. Camden, in his "*Britannia*," speaks of this fish, and calls it *Gwiniad*.

† Castell Prysor.

‡ More probably "*Sawn Lleon*," so called because it led to Chester (*Caer-Lleon*).—Jones, "*History of Brecknockshire*."

§ Mr Lhwyd saw and copied the inscription in 1687. He reads *rianus* for *pianus*, and *Porius* for *Porus*. See Camden's "*Britannia*" (Gibson's edition, Oxford, 1695), p. 662.

ages, a landmark to the country-side. The boy must have known by heart the strange wild stories of a half-mythical past, still chanted by the bards of his country, to the clanging of their deep-toned harps. His young soul was nurtured in an atmosphere of romantic legend, while his body grew strong and hardy amid the mountains of his wild and beautiful home. Little wonder if the strong, sensitive Celtic nature, so passionately stirred by all that is noble, beautiful, and mysterious, loathed instinctively the cold, bald, unspiritual religion which was being forced on his people, and longed for something higher and more ideal.

He tells us that his parents were Catholics at heart, and that he himself ever in his soul venerated the Catholic religion. But the times were bad. It was now many years since Elizabeth* had begun to destroy the old Catholic Church in England, and to substitute for it a new body of her own creation. The last Prelate of the old hierarchy, Watson of Lincoln, died a prisoner in Wisbech Castle in 1584,† and after his death England remained for forty years without a single bishop to watch over the persecuted flock of Christ. The ancient hierarchy had been violently deprived and expelled from their Sees at the beginning of the reign, and at the time of John Roberts' birth, it was seventeen years since Holy Mass had been celebrated in the desecrated churches of England and Wales.

The Queen had deprived the old Catholic clergy of their benefices unless they would take an oath of allegiance

* She came to the Throne November 17, 1558.

† He died September 27, 1584. Goldwell, Bishop of St Asaph's, survived him a few months, but he was not in England since the accession of Elizabeth. This holy Bishop died at the Theatine house in Rome (San Silvestro del Quirinale) April 3, 1585. See Bridgett and Knox, "Queen Elizabeth and the Catholic Hierarchy."

to her as Supreme Governess of the Church of England. This Oath of Supremacy was the touchstone of fidelity; it was administered to all ecclesiastical persons, all magistrates, all taking any degree in the Universities, and all civil servants of the Crown. A first refusal involved the loss of position or benefice; a second, confiscation of goods and perpetual imprisonment; a third, death with all the horrible penalties of high treason.*

It is very difficult to know what proportion of the clergy refused to take this sacrilegious Oath, and were in consequence deprived of their benefices. The royal visitors of the province of York in 1559 summoned ninety priests to take it; of these only twenty-one consented. The Universities were almost emptied, so much so, that the Queen had to suspend enforcing the Oath for a time.

The diocese of Bangor to which Trawsvynydd belongs was in a miserable state enough. We still have the report which Bishop Roland Meyrick made of it in 1561. At this date the parson of "Trausfyneth" was a certain Owen ap Res, "resident and keepeth house"; he was not in holy orders at all.†

There were in fact only eight parsons in the county of Merionethshire, and of these two were not in orders. There were fourteen parishes in the county, so that little more than half were provided for; besides which some of these eight parsons did not reside in their parishes.‡ A

* Of course it was seldom that the Government dared to resort to pressing the Oath a third time. Nor did Elizabeth wish people to be pushed to this extremity. Horne, the Protestant Bishop of Winchester, however, tried to enforce it in the case of the imprisoned Bishop of London, Bonner.

† See Brown-Willis, "A Survey of the Cathedral Church of Bangor."

‡ Bishop Roland Meyrick's return of the state of his diocese, made to Archbishop Parker in 1561. It is to be found in the MSS. Matthæi Parker, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Miscell. 4, and has been printed by Brown-Willis.

sufficient number of clergy could not be found to fill up the parishes left pastorless through the deprivation of the Catholic incumbents. The new bishops were forced to appoint laymen as "readers," who were just able to stumble through the Prayer-book service on Sundays. There were only two parsons in the diocese of Bangor who were able to preach, one being the Rector of Llanfrothen, who resided at Ruthyn.

We do not know if Master Owen ap Res still enjoyed his benefice at the time of our hero's birth.* Be that as it may, the old parish church of St Madryn was a sad sight to Catholic eyes when the future martyr was carried thither to receive the maimed baptismal rites of the Protestant Establishment.

The church indeed could still boast of much of its architectural beauty, but it now stood empty and deserted, or, if a scanty congregation met on Sundays beneath its roof, it was composed of those who, like the parents of our hero, were driven thither by fear of temporal loss. The altars of sacrifice had disappeared, the consecrated stone was very likely lying in the centre of the aisle that all might trample on it as they passed;† the rood-loft, with its sacred figures of Jesus, Mary, and John, had given way to the royal arms of Elizabeth, with a lion and a dog as supporters. The only religious emblem, if such it could be called, was a tablet fixed on the eastern wall, inscribed with the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic law, which had been commanded to be placed there in order that men

* The Bishop of Bangor was Nicholas Robinson, who succeeded Meyrick in 1566.

† Altar stones in this disgraceful position are to be found all over England—in Ely, Salisbury, and Lincoln Cathedrals, among others. They were deliberately put to even more abominable uses. Grindal, second Archbishop of Canterbury, "*secundum ordinem* Elizabeth," ordered them "to be everywhere broken up, destroyed, and defaced."

might know that the building was a temple of the Most High. The new clergy were worthy of the temples, and of the authority which had created them; the bishops were heretics of the lowest type, whose principal object seems to have been to provide a rich dowry for their sons and daughters,* and they were constrained for want of better subjects (as we have just seen at Trawsvynydd), to lay their hands on "cobblers, weavers, tinkers, tanners, cardmakers, tapsters, fiddlers, jailers, and such like," in order to fill the places of the faithful clergy. Multitudes of these were in exile. Bridgewater† gives us a list of about six hundred, of whose sufferings, imprisonment, or exile he himself knew, only up till the year 1588, when the worst of the persecution was yet to come. Many wandered in disguise about the country, saying Mass secretly in the houses of Catholics; while others, who had been weak enough to take the Oath of Supremacy, or (if they managed to escape this) at least to use the new Service Books, and act as ministers of the new Church, might still be found here and there lingering on in their old benefices.

As to the people who formed their congregations; it is easy to blame the conduct of such as the Roberts family of Trawsvynydd, who went occasionally to the Protestant service in order to avoid the heavy fines imposed on recusants. But when we think that the forfeiture of £20 a lunar month (and we must multiply the sum at least by eight in order to get its modern value) could be and was exacted for non-attendance, and realise that this meant absolute beggary to all but the most wealthy, it is better to pity than condemn their weakness.

To be "reconciled," *i.e.* to be absolved, or to harbour a

* Gelly, the son of Rowland Meyrick, Bishop of Bangor, became, says Brown-Willis, "an unlucky sharer of the revenues of this Church." Such instances might be multiplied *ad infinitum*.

† Bridgewater, "Concertatio Ecclesiæ Catholicæ."

priest,* involved the death-penalty, yet some were found who kept a priest secretly hidden in their houses in order that they might be reconciled at the last hour to God's Church, out of which they dared not die, though in it they dared not live. Terrible stories were told of such schismatics being carried off by sudden and unprepared death before the priest could be summoned; one such poor man, who had two sons priests living in his own house, fell down dead as he was entering the Church of St Mary at Oxford. Yet even such warnings did not prevent many from frequenting the Protestant services, though they loathed them in their hearts. It was thus that the rising generation was lost to the Church; it was the weakness of these "schismatics" which made the persecution possible.

The poor, who could not pay the heavy Mass-mulct,† much less the forfeiture for not coming to the Calvinistic preachings and services, were treated with even greater severity. Many were cruelly whipped in the open market-places, others had their ears cut off, others were burnt through the ear or put in the pillory, others imprisoned till they yielded to their persecutors. Their goods were confiscated, their furniture seized upon, their cattle driven off and sold in order to pay the fines.

An Act of the thirty-fifth year of Elizabeth (1593) confined all recusants "to some certain place of abode"; they could not go for more than five miles away from their dwelling-place without an express license from the authorities, under penalty of forfeiture of goods, chattels, and lands. Such was Church life in the "golden days of good Queen Bess."

* That is one of the Seminary priests, whose ministrations became more and more necessary as the Marian priests died out.

† The fine of 100 marks for hearing Mass.

John Roberts got his first schooling likely enough from some "old priest,"* many of whom earned a scanty living by teaching Latin grammar to the boys of their neighbourhood. But when he was nineteen he was sent up to Oxford to study his Humanities.

The famous University had been reduced to a perilous state by the revolution in religion. The great exodus of Catholics (both professors and students) who could not bring themselves to take the Oath of Supremacy, had left her schools deserted in the early years of Elizabeth. Then, too, her Chairs were filled by Puritans of the lowest type of culture, though even yet strong Catholic instincts and traditions lingered in those sacred and venerable halls where once Wisdom sat enthroned and Religion shed her brightest beams. *Dominus illuminatio mea* was still the motto of fallen Oxford, but alas! the light was quenched. The glories of Catholic Oxford must rather now be sought on a foreign soil—at Douai or Louvain, where Allen and Stapleton, Bristowe and Martin, Harding, Bridgewater, and their successors had sought to perpetuate the traditions of Alma Mater amid the exiles for conscience' sake, and to train up Englishmen in the old learning and the old religion, who should not be unworthy to compete with those who had made bygone Oxford the glory of the Christian world.†

Nevertheless it had been found almost impossible to quench the Catholic spirit, which saturated, as it were, the

* So the Marian priests were called, to distinguish them from the new or Seminary priests, sent into England from the Colleges founded by Dr Allen.

† "It must be known," says Anthony Wood, the Protestant historian of Oxford, "that in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the University of Oxford was so empty, after the Catholics had left it, upon the alteration of religion, that there was very seldom a sermon preached in the University Church called St Mary." He names nineteen heads of Colleges at Oxford (and his list is incomplete, e.g. Allen and Bridgewater

very stones of Oxford. In 1589 it had been thought necessary "to give the scholars a lesson," and a terrible one it was. Two priests and two laymen then suffered in her streets the horrible penalties of high treason, for no other crime than fidelity to the ancient faith. One of them, the poor ostler of the Catharine Wheel Inn, was the fellow-countryman of our hero, and like enough, when the young Welshman entered Oxford on a February day in 1595-6, he may have seen the bleaching skull of the Venerable Humphrey ap Richard still impaled above the battlements of the old Norman Castle.

A revival of learning in the great University was commencing at this time, though Calvinism was still dominant. In the small and unimportant College of St John there was living a young Bachelor of Arts, who was destined to play a most important part in this revival, as in the harder task of releasing the Anglican Establishment from a portion of the reproach of ignorant Puritanism which it then justly bore. William Laud was to be indeed a great light and a great benefactor both to Oxford in general and to St John's College in particular; and yet to the eye of faith a purer glory belongs to the humble Welsh student whom Oxford was to expel from her bosom, and whom St John's has never reckoned among its illustrious alumni.

For it was to this College (though for what reason we know not) that our hero bent his steps. He matriculated

are not mentioned) ejected for upholding the old faith; twenty-three fellows of New College alone shared the same fate. "Our universities," laments the famous Bishop Jewel, "are in a most lamentable state . . . there are not above two in Oxford of our sentiments."—*See Tierney-Dodd, "Church History of England,"* vol. ii. pp. 140 and cccxvi. (Appendix).

Among the martyred priests in Elizabeth's and subsequent reigns, no less than forty-four were educated for a time at Oxford. The best students were constantly leaving and slipping over to Douai or Rheims, where the name of Allen was a tremendous attraction.

20th February 1595-6,* and from that day his Oxford career began. St John's had been founded in 1554 by Sir Thomas White, who was Lord Mayor of London at the beginning of Queen Mary's reign, on the site of the old Cistercian College of St Bernard.† The hall and chapel were still those of the old monastery, the fine old cellars belonged to the good old days, and there still stood the statue of the holy Bernard over the great gateway.‡ It lay just outside the city, which was entered by the Bocardo Gate.

The traditions of the College were rather Catholic than Protestant, and it still remembered with pride and regret the brilliant scholar who had illustrated its early years, and since had come to so tragic an end—the blessed Edmund Campion. It is true that since the death of the generous and noble-hearted founder, over whom Campion preached so touching an elegy, affairs had not changed for the better at St John's. In 1572, the fourth President of the College was ejected, like his three predecessors, for "Popery" (*i.e.* for refusing to take the Oath of Supremacy); and under the care of Horne, Bishop of Winchester, the College received a new constitution, the suspected Papists (nine out of twenty) were ejected from their fellowships, and their places filled by Protestants, while a staunch Anglican President was found in the person of Toby Matthews, since Bishop of Durham.§

Still, however, the old spirit had not been thoroughly

* He is entered in the Oxford Registers as "*generosi filius*" of Merionethshire.—"Reg. Oxon," II. ii. 212.

† Founded by Archbishop Chicheley in 1438.

‡ See "William Laud," by W. H. Hutton, pp. 5, 6. Methuen & Co., 1895.

§ For a very interesting sketch of the College in B. Campion's time, see Simpson's "Life of Edmund Campion." London, Williams and Norgate, 1867.

expelled; many of the Fellows since then had suffered for their faith; again and again occurs the entry in the College annals, "*Alterata religione aut evasit aut deprivatus est.*" Prominent among the Fellows at the time of our hero's admission to the College was William Buckeridge, who was Laud's tutor, and from whom he seems to have imbibed his hatred of the dominant Calvinism of the University. The President of this time was Ralph Hutchenson, M.A., and Physician, who was afterward Vicar of Crapethorne in Worcestershire and Charlbury in Oxfordshire.

And so in 1596 a third martyr was added to the glorious names of Campion and Mayne,* which make the College of the Precursor for ever dear to every Catholic heart. Of the life our hero led at Oxford we can get a fair idea from contemporary writers.

Nicholas Fitzherbert, for instance, in his interesting account of the University, gives us many graphic details.† He tells us that there were about 3000 students (though this is almost certainly an exaggerated estimate) living in sixteen Colleges and eight Halls. The latter were frequented by the rich and noble, as the discipline was laxer, though the Colleges also, in addition to the members of the foundation, received a number of commoners, noble youths for the most part, who lived at their own expense. John Roberts was one of this class. Fitzherbert gives a very ideal picture of the "modesty, taciturnity, obedience, and zeal for study" which caused Erasmus to compare

* B. Cuthbert Mayne, proto-martyr of the Seminary priests (as B. Edmund Campion of the Jesuits), was only chaplain to St John's College.

† Nicolai Fieberti, "Oxon. in Anglia Academiæ descriptio" Romæ, 1602. Reprinted "Oxford Hist. Soc.: *Elizabethan Oxford*," vol. vii. The writer was in the household of Cardinal Allen. We shall hear of him again in this history as the great friend of the English Benedictine monks.

the Colleges to well-ordered monasteries of religious monks. The students rose at five o'clock in the morning, and the College gates were closed for the night at nine in summer and eight in winter, at the signal of the great bell, Tom of Christchurch—a custom observed down to our own time. "If anyone is found outside after these hours scarcely any excuse will serve to deliver him from the Proctor's hands and his prison."* The students attended the Chapel every morning—though, alas! it was no longer to hear Holy Mass; and a Latin Service was prescribed by Elizabeth, which we believe has lasted till our own day at St John's.

"For two years they study with their private tutors, within the walls of the College, Logic, and the other parts of Philosophy, and also Rhetoric. These they learn together, *i.e.* at once to think correctly and express their thoughts with elegance and precision." After this they go into "the public arena," and enter for a disputation known as "generals," or "general Sophists." After two years' more study and constant exercise in public disputations they take their Bachelor's degree. The under-graduates who failed to pass their degree were "sent down," we may note, by the stricter Colleges.†

Such then was the life of our hero during his brief University career. It was, in fact, so brief that he cannot even have passed his "generals," far less taken his degree. Probably he was unwilling to take the Oath of Supremacy, for, as he tells us, he was always a Catholic at heart. He must have been thrown at St John's into constant communication with a fellow-countryman of like ideas and aspirations, one who was to be drawn in future years

* *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

† We may perhaps be permitted to quote some lines of Thomas Hobbes

into the very closest intimacy with him, as a brother in holy religion and in the apostolic life. This was John Jones or Scudamore, of whom we shall hear much in the sequel. He was at present a student, a little senior to Roberts, and he shared the humble chamber of William Laud, whose friendship he enjoyed to the end, in spite of the great divergences of belief and interests which separated them in after years. Roberts too must have known Laud, though doubtless not so intimately, owing to his seniority. In their company, however, he studied, and probably took part with them in the Christmas plays which were so important a feature of the College life, and which were so offensive to the Puritans. He left Oxford, as we have said, at the beginning of 1598; little thinking, perhaps, that it was an eternal farewell. He went to London, and there got admitted to one of the Inns of Court, where he began to study, he tells us, Municipal Law, under the patronage of a certain noble knight, whose name, unfortunately, is withheld.

of Malmesbury as a further elucidation of the subject. He entered Magdalen Hall in 1602.

“ At Fourteen I was to Oxford sent
 And there of Magd’len Hall admitted, I
 Myself to Logic first did then apply,
 And sedulously I my Tutor heard,
 Who gravely Read, althou’ he had no Beard,
Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferio, Baralypton;
 These Modes hath the first figure : then goes on
Cesare, Camestres, Festino, Baroco, Darapti,
 This hath of Modes the same variety.
Felapton, Disamis, Datist, Bocardo, Ferison
 These just so many Modes are looked upon.
 Which I, though slowly, Learn, and then dispense
 With them, and prove things after my own sense.
 Then Physicks read, and my Tutor display’d
 How all Things were of Form and Matter made.
 The Aëry Particles which make forms we see,
 Both Visble and Audible, to be
 The Effects of Sympathy, Antipathy,
 And many things above my reach taught me.
 Therefore more pleasant studies I then sought,
 Which I was formerly, tho’ not well, taught.

—“Oxford Hist. Soc. vol. xxii., *Reminiscences of Oxford*,” pp. 16-17.

We trust the reader will excuse the doggerel for the sake of the interest of the subject.

The Inns of Court at this time were regarded as "hotbeds of Popery." Many and many a scholar of those ancient seats of learning left the Law for the Gospel, and fled across the seas to study at Rheims or Douai. Nowhere might there be found so many Catholic priests as in the Courts of the Temple or Lincoln's Inn, under the disguise of the lawyer's gown. More than one of our martyrs found a shelter there, and in the Protestant books of the period the Inns are always denounced as strongholds of "treason." It was in the rooms of a barrister of the Middle Temple that the proto-martyr of the venerable Roman College, blessed Ralph Sherwin, was taken (and dearly had his host to pay for his charity); it was in a room in Lincoln's Inn that the Bull of Excommunication issued by S. Pius V. against Elizabeth was found.

Such instances might be indefinitely multiplied. A letter of the early part of James I.'s reign states: "By express order of the King upon the petition of his Bishops, the law students in all the Colleges of London [*i.e.* the Inns of Court; they were, as a matter of fact, real colleges in those days], who are of the flower of the English nobility, are compelled to receive the Supper of Calvin (*la Cena di Calvino*), which action they have performed some sitting, some walking, some kneeling, and with other signs of contempt." *

Another future pillar of the Benedictine Order, the holy Father Augustine Baker, a Welshman and an Oxonian like our martyr, was also probably at this very

* Letter in the Archives S.J. at Rome, 10th June 1610, Ap. Foley, "Collectanea," vol. ii. p. 1016. We need hardly say we do not instance this conduct as praiseworthy; but it shows the anti-Anglican spirit in these Inns of Court, even after fifty years of Protestantism, and among those who were too weak to profess their faith openly.

time studying Law in the Temple. He too was still a Protestant; and it is by no means improbable that the two may have met. The future author of "Sancta Sophia" speaks with the warmest admiration of the holiness of the future martyr, and it is pleasant to suppose that their friendship may have begun so early. Be this as it may, John Roberts was not to remain long at his law studies. But a few months can have elapsed before we find him in far different scenes. At the beginning of the Easter or of the Trinity vacation he must have left London and his law books. Providence was guiding his unconscious steps to meet the great crisis of his life.

CHAPTER II.

CONVERSION.

YEPES, the old Benedictine chronicler, of whom we have already spoken, prefixes to his account of the next and all-important scenes of his friend and hero's life some philosophical reflections about the English love of travelling. He says they are exceedingly fond of seeing the world, and making journeys and pilgrimages over sea and land, since they hope to acquire much useful experience in considering the various customs of different nations and provinces.

The Englishman of the nineteenth century will sympathise naturally with the young lawyer's clerk who felt stirred by this desire to see the world, in the far-off days of Queen Elizabeth. Certainly this longing, which seems to be in our blood, is as strong as ever it was; and equally surely it has been, and still is, one of the causes of the spread of England's greatness over the whole habitable world. Her sons are not content "to sit at home at ease." They sigh for adventures, for strange sights and new experiences, and thus has come about, little by little, the commercial and political pre-eminence and world-wide influence exercised by the people of this

island, insignificant as it is in size, and isolated as it is in position.

The foundations of this power and influence may be said to have been laid during Elizabeth's long reign. The New World had not been discovered by English seamen, but they were already beginning to dispute the golden prey with the Spaniard. Sir Francis Drake had raised the enthusiasm of English youth to fever-pitch by returning from the first voyage ever made round the globe, laden with treasure of almost incredible value. But more than the treasure was reckoned the honour conferred on him by the Queen, who had condescended to visit the great explorer (and, if truth be told, the slave-dealer and pirate) in his ship, and dine with him in his cabin. Elizabeth knew what she was about in encouraging the daring and enterprise, and in shutting her eyes to the lawless crimes of buccaneers like Drake; it was owing to men like these that England, which, as Lingard says, at her accession ranked only among the second-rate powers, rose before her death to a level with the first nations in Europe.*

Young Roberts, too, desired to see the world, and, armed with the necessary Government permission, left England for a continental tour in the early summer of the year 1598. He set out probably after the close of the Easter Law term, and soon found himself at Paris.

Yepes, who had known our martyr intimately, and most tenderly loved him, assures us that his sole object in travelling was amusement and recreation.

But there have been men, who, while they travelled in Catholic lands from mere curiosity, have had the grace to find something far higher and far greater than they

* Lingard, "History of England," vol. viii. p. 398. Dolman.

came to seek; and Roberts is not the only one who has set out in the gaiety of his heart upon a foreign tour, not knowing whither he went, and has been caught in the nets of Peter, and drawn to God by the sweet attraction of the one true faith.

He left his country a Protestant, though we know he had long had secret doubts about the religion in which he had been brought up; and he was not to return again to her till he came as a Catholic, as a priest, as a missionary—a monk of the same sacred Order which had first won his people to Christ.

In Paris he fell in with one of the numerous English Catholics who lived in exile there ("an English knight," says Yepes*). This gentleman, after some conversations with the young man, became much interested in him, and felt a great compassion for him, entangled as he was by error. Therefore (seeing that he had to do with a man of excellent parts) he began to persuade him to renounce the heresy which he had imbibed in his own country, and embrace the truth as set forth by our holy Mother the Church. Little by little our hero's prejudices gave way, and the secret veneration which he had always cherished in his heart of hearts for the Catholic religion gained the upper hand.

It was not long before the young lawyer owned himself vanquished, and asked to be instructed in the faith, that he might be received into the Church.

The priest to whom was reserved the happiness of receiving our future martyr's abjuration was a Canon Penitentiary of Notre Dame; and it was in this venerable Gothic Cathedral, one fair June morning, that John Roberts

* As we shall see in the sequel, this was probably a Mr More, who had entered the household of the Archbishop of Bordeaux. See Dom James I. i. 7.

knelt to receive absolution from his heresy, and the peace and communion of Holy Church. How his heart thrilled with joy as the Canon Louis Godibert pronounced the words of reconciliation, and held up before his eager eyes the immaculate Lamb of God, who had taken away his sins! All was forgotten—home, kindred, friends; and in the hush and rapture of that first Communion John vowed to devote the rest of his life to the God Who had shown him such wondrous mercy and love.

"Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?" was the cry of a heart bursting with thankfulness. *"Calicem salutaris accipiam et nomen Domini invocabo."** Not yet did he know how deeply he should drain his Lord's chalice!

But on one thing he was resolved from the first; all his future life should be wholly devoted to God, and, if possible, to winning back his countrymen to the faith of which they had been so cruelly robbed.

He loses no time now in pleasure-seeking or objectless travelling; as soon as he can find some opening for his new life, he will leave Paris. And it is not long before such an opportunity comes. The friend to whom he owed his conversion seems to have been attached to the household of Cardinal François d'Escoubleau de Sourdis, Archbishop-elect of Bordeaux.† To this prelate he hastened to introduce his protégé, and the good Cardinal soon became greatly interested in the young Welsh convert. He gave him introductions to influential ecclesiastics in his Cathedral city, and especially to the Jesuit Fathers established there.

* What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me? . . . I will receive the chalice of salvation, and will call upon the name of the Lord." (Ps. cxv. 3).

† Consecrated Bishop in December 1599.—Gam, "Series Episcoporum,"

This we learn from Yepes, while Father Roberts himself tells us of another acquaintance he then made, whose advice had helped to determine his future career. This was John Cecil,* who had been one of the first students of the English College at Valladolid, and was now living at Paris. He was a very different man from John Roberts, and was to win a sad notoriety as a betrayer of his brethren; but he befriended our hero at this critical moment of his career. The young convert's desire was to visit Rome, and pray at the tomb of the Apostles, and then doubtless to enter, if possible, the famous English College of St Thomas of Canterbury, already the mother of so many martyrs. But Cecil turned his thoughts towards the younger College of St Alban, at Valladolid, and gave him letters for the authorities there; so it was towards Spain, and not towards Italy, that he bent his steps.

On his way thither he stayed for a time at the Jesuit College in Bordeaux, where he was well received, thanks to the Cardinal's recommendation. The Fathers applauded his design of going on to Valladolid; and in order that his reception there might be assured, gave him letters to the well-known Father Creswell, Vice-Prefect of the English Mission, who was at that time residing at Madrid.

Two years before he had published the *Life of the Venerable Henry Walpole*, the Jesuit martyr, who had owed his conversion to a drop of blood that spirted on him

* John Cecil was one of the leading appellants against the authority of the Archpriest. He was one of the delegates who conducted the appeal at Rome. At present he was at Paris on their business. He was an M.A. of Oxford. His treachery is proved too well by the correspondence to be found in the State Papers and elsewhere. He was in constant communication with the Government.

He had been sent from Rome and admitted to the Valladolid College, 1st September 1589. There is an "information" about him, containing much to his discredit, in the "Westminster Archives," viii. p. 71 (1606).

from the mangled body of the blessed Edmund Campion, as he endured the cruel butchery of Tyburn. The drop of blood had been a fruitful seed, and the young Protestant had become in his turn a Catholic, a Jesuit, and a martyr.

Henry Walpole had been Father Minister at the College of Valladolid, and his glorious example cannot have been without effect on the young convert who now came to Father Creswell at Madrid. Doubtless he read with enthusiasm the little book (now become so scarce as to be almost unique), which first excited in the heart of the noble Spanish lady, Donna Luisa de Carvajal, the desire to go to England and devote her life to God's servants there.

It is very possible that Father Creswell may have taken Roberts to see Donna Luisa, for we read it was her greatest joy to see English Catholics, and hear news of the persecution in that land; so that the friendship between them, which was to be so beautifully manifested in the closing scenes of the martyr's life, may have begun already at Madrid in September 1598.

However this may be, Father Creswell having examined his petitioner, and found him to be a lad of excellent promise, sent him at once to the Seminary, which he reached on the 15th of September.

This was the first, but by no means the last journey that the future martyr was to make through Catholic Spain. Travelling on foot, staying in some religious house at night when possible, or begging a shelter for the love of the Catholic Faith for which he was an exile, he cannot have found it an easy thing. Added to this, he did not know the language, and he seems to have been quite alone.

In the Life of Donna Luisa Carvajal is a quotation from a letter of an English gentleman, the Rev. John Sandford, written in 1610, which gives a graphic picture of travelling in Spain at this period.

"I hear Catholics lately come from thence to speak much good of that country," he says, "but when I read Clenard's epistle of his journey thither I am apt to believe the contrary: who, having been a public reader at Louvain, as he passed through Biscay, having broken a little drinking-glass, he was fain to drink water like Diogenes in his hand, because all the village was not able to lend him another. Near Valladolid he could hardly get a faggot of nine branches to warm him in a sharp weather. His supper at night was indeed a *cæna dubia*, not, as the Latins meant it, a plentiful one which made the guests doubt where to feed, but, *quod incertum erat an cogeretur jejunare*. His *olla* was a poor deal of bacon, which he was fain to buy by ounces. His stomach roaring for want of victuals, he was forced to betake himself to roast onions. His inn could not afford him either bed or straw, but having hired three blackamoors, he slept by hanging on their shoulders or by being stayed up by them!"

But there were even worse trials to fear. More than one poor Catholic student travelling in Spain had been arrested and thrown into prison as an English spy.* The feeling between the two countries was naturally far from cordial at this time, with Elizabeth's buccaneers ravaging and plundering the Spanish settlements in the New World, with an occasional raid on the ports of Spain. Only two years before, Cadiz, the strongest fortress in the Spanish dominions, had been razed to the ground by the Earl of Essex's expedition, with a further loss of thirteen men-of-war and immense magazines of provisions and naval stores. Philip II. was now meditating a second Armada against England, and even

* Just before the founding of the College, this had happened to three at Burgos.

indulged hopes of placing his daughter, the Infanta, on the throne occupied by Elizabeth.

Thus it will be seen that English travellers were hardly likely to be favourably regarded in Spain; though, when they were known to be Catholics, they were always welcomed with the greatest kindness. Spanish sympathy was ever warmly shown to the persecuted English exiles; and the martyrdoms which "that impious Jezebel" was constantly perpetrating in England sent a thrill of horror and compassion through the hearts of that pre-eminently Catholic people. If John Roberts could show who he was, and what was the object of his journey (and this his introductions would do), he would be well received everywhere. At S. Juan de Luz he had had the good fortune to fall in with an English Catholic merchant named Oliver, who entertained him most kindly, and furnished him with some valuable introductions.* So at last he arrived at Valladolid on September 15, 1598, as we have already said.

Valladolid was the birthplace of Philip II., and for this reason was much favoured by that pious but gloomy monarch. The Court was most frequently there during this and the next reign.

The great Cathedral, which still stands bare and unfinished, was at this time in course of building. It is considered the masterpiece of Herrera, the architect of the Escorial. But little remains nowadays of old Valladolid, for the town was almost completely destroyed by the French, and has been newly laid out in squares.

John Roberts, on his arrival, found his way at once to the English College of St Alban. The College was still in its youth, having been founded in 1589 through the

* Yepes, *op. cit.*

efforts of the famous Jesuit, Father Robert Persons. This is the story of its beginning. At Father Persons' suggestion three students had been sent from the Rheims Seminary at the beginning of May. By the end of the month they landed at Corunna, and after many difficulties and escapes, at length arrived, friendless and unknown, at Valladolid. Owing to some mistake Father Persons was not there to receive them, nor had he provided for them in any way. Fortunately, they found two other young Englishmen, who were studying in the town, and through their means found a small lodging. For three months they had to live on the charity of a Spanish grandee, till Father Persons arrived with ample succours, contributed by the Duchess of Feria, Sir Francis Englefield, and other English well-wishers. He soon hired the house, which afterwards became the College, drew up rules, gave the students an academical dress, and before Michaelmas 1589 all was prosperously started. In 1590, by the help of the same generous Spanish nobleman, Don Alfonso de Quinones, the house was purchased and enlarged, and a few months later a permanent pension was settled on the College by the Spanish Crown.* This pension was 1600 crowns, and the generosity of the Spanish nobility made it up to a sum of 4000. In 1592 the College (which was dedicated to S. Alban, proto-martyr of England) was confirmed by a Bull of Pope Clement VIII.; and the numbers were gradually greatly increased. Thus in 1590 there were nearly thirty students, and in 1598, when our hero knocked at the College gate, there were already fifty-three; while there was a community of ten Jesuits in residence. The College had flourished exceedingly, and

* From a MS. of Blackfan, one of the original students. Tierney-Dodd, ii. pp. 176-8.

already, as we have noticed before, had given martyrs to the Church.

Father Creswell had been Rector till his appointment as Vice-Prefect of the English Mission.

The buildings consisted at this time of the original dwelling-house and others, which had been bought and added to gradually. In the year of John Roberts' arrival, the Church was being considerably enlarged through a legacy left by the late Archbishop of Toledo.

The young man who knocked at the doors of the College on that September day was not to be the least glory of this illustrious Seminary. He received, doubtless, a warm welcome from the authorities, armed as he was with so many recommendations to their kindness; and it must have been indeed a joy to him to find himself, for the first time, in a Catholic community of his own countrymen, to hear the dear old English tongue once more, and join in common worship with Englishmen who had sacrificed all for their fidelity to the ancient Faith.*

It was into no ordinary society of young men that he found himself admitted that St Luke's Day. The students of the College of St Alban had for the most part already given unequivocal proofs of their zeal for God's cause.

* We give his account of himself as recorded in the "Liber primi examinis" of the College, to which we alluded to in the first chapter, and which has already been of so much service to us. It runs as follows:—

"Joannes Robertus venit ad hoc collegium 15^o Septembris. Natus in Transwenith in comitatu Merviniæ, natus parentibus nobilibus et in corde Catholicis, annosque habet jam duos et viginti, et ipse semper corde veneratus est religionem Catholicam: studuit Oxoniæ per duos annos literis humanioribus, postea juri Municipali studuit Londini in clientelam nobilis cujusdam equitis in Angliâ ascitus: Assumptus est in unionem ecclie Catholice tribus abhinc mensibus Parissiis a Dño Ludovico Godeberto, Canonico ecclie Parissiensis, et cum in votis haberet Romam proficisci, huc missus est a P. Joanne Cæcilio Parissiis comorante: humiliter petiit admitti in

A recent writer* has said of them: "Most of the students reached this haven only after experiencing a thousand trials. In 1592 a father and his sons arrive at Valladolid, after having tramped barefoot across England and Ireland. They had sacrificed all for the Faith—fortune, friends, family—and the story of their sufferings moves the hearers to tears.

"Two years later, two young men knock at the door of the Seminary. Their father, a rich nobleman, has died in bonds, after a captivity of eight long years. They themselves were born and brought up in prison, and now are sent to Valladolid by their mother, who herself remains in England, in order to devote her life to the service of the persecuted Catholics.

"Another day, a quite young lad, almost a boy, after having endured in England the frightful torture of the rack, comes, with the aureole of martyrdom about his brow, to resume the studies which the persecution has violently interrupted.

"For all this plot of English earth on the hospitable soil of Spain was a halting-place, where they took in new strength and light, before returning to their unhappy country."

hoc Collegium propter desiderium quo flagrabat in vineâ Dni operarius fieri; et admissus est 18 Octobris anni 1598."

"John Roberts came to this College September 15. He was born in Transwenith, in the county of Merioneth, of noble parents Catholic at heart, and is now two and twenty years of age, and he also has always revered the Catholic religion in his heart. He studied humanities at Oxford for two years, afterwards he studied Municipal Law at London, under the charge of a certain noble English knight. He was received into the communion of the Catholic church three months ago at Paris, by M. Louis Godebert, Canon of the church of Paris: and intending to go on to Rome, he was sent hither by Fr. John Cecil, living at Paris. He humbly begged to be admitted into this College, on account of the burning desire he had to become a labourer in our Lord's vineyard: and he was admitted October 18, 1598."

* "Quatre portraits de femmes," par la Comtesse de Courson, p. 135. Paris, Didot, 1895.

Bishop Yepes, in his most interesting and valuable "*Historia de la persecucion*," also gives us many a story of heroic endurance and faithful constancy exhibited by the students whom John Roberts found and made friends with in that autumn of 1598.

Among them were some whose adventures would make a thrilling story, which some day we hope to tell—mere boys who had tasted the lash in the foul dungeons of Bridewell, and had had hairbreadth escapes from numberless foes before safely reaching Valladolid. And only two out of the eleven who started reached the goal at all.

Three more had been taken prisoners with Father Baldwin the Jesuit as they were sailing with two more students from Calais to Spain, on their way from the College of St Omer to that of Valladolid. With what glee would they still recount how Father Baldwin had tricked the heretics, pretending to be a Neapolitan merchant who did not understand a word of English. In spite of all the snares laid for him, they had never discovered who he really was till they had let the prize slip out of their fingers. And the boys could tell stories of their imprisonment in Lambeth Palace, where they had had many a tussle with the sour Calvinistic Archbishop Bancroft, from whose custody they had at last escaped by scaling the wall, and so across the river to London.

None perhaps had so moving a tale to tell as the young lad who had been one of the companions of the venerable martyr, Father William Davis, in his long imprisonment in Beaumaris Castle. Taken with three other boys, as they were on the point of leaving England under the charge of this holy priest, he had shared his sufferings and captivity up to his cruel martyrdom in July 1593.

He could tell of the trial scene, when all five were condemned to death, at which, nothing daunted, the priest intoned the *Te Deum*, while his young companions as joyfully took up the hymn of thanksgiving. Then he would narrate the beautiful life they led in the prison, following a strict order of religious exercises, with daily mass, office, prayer and study, as though they were in a religious community. Six months they spent thus, till the cruel day came when their Father was led out to death, praising God with a loud voice, "that he was now to be so happy as to shed his blood for the love of His Divine Majesty." And then with tears he would show his greatest treasure, a part of the martyr's habit, all soaked and drenched with blood, which he had been happy enough to be able to buy back from the executioner. And he also (though he would pass this over modestly, unless urged to tell it all) had had his little martyrdom to bear, when, after the priest's triumphant end, the little band was scattered, and he was placed with a harsh Protestant schoolmaster "to be whipped into a conformity with the Church by law established." * But at last he, too, had found his way to the haven at Valladolid.

Such were some of the stories which our young convert would hear at recreation-time from the lips of his fellow-students, stories well calculated to inflame his zeal and kindle his ardour to labour and suffer for the love of Christ, and for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

As to the life he would have to lead in the College, we are fortunate enough to know every detail of it. Bishop Yepes has scrupulously preserved the *horarium*, which we transcribe for our reader's benefit.

* For the whole story—it is most touching and beautiful—see Bishop Yepes, *op. cit.*, or Challoner, i. pp. 299-308, who, however (as Fr. Pollen points out, *op. cit.*, p. 142), has not given all the details.

The good Bishop of Tاراçona (who wrote in 1599) was greatly interested in the College; and when the Court was at Valladolid no doubt often visited it. He relates with great detail the visit paid by his royal penitent, Philip II., to the College, on the Feast of the Invention of the Relics of St Stephen, 1595.

This is the sort of life that the student at Valladolid would be required to lead. He rose in summer at half-past four, in winter at half-past five, and after half an hour's interval for dressing, arranging his bed, and private prayer, spent half an hour in mental prayer. After meditation followed Mass, at which all assisted. The rest of the morning till dinner was spent in study, either in attending the schools at the University, which they frequented in common with the other students of the town, or in private study in their rooms. The dinner hour was at half-past ten in the summer (not too soon when we reflect that this was also breakfast) and at half-past eleven in winter; and here was practised, as at Douai, an admirable plan of Cardinal Allen's for making the students thoroughly conversant with Holy Scripture. After the dinner, during which a portion of Holy Scripture was read (so arranged that the whole Bible was gone through in two years*), the students remained in the Refectory while the reader, servers, etc., took their meal; and then (during "second table," as it is called in religious houses and colleges) a Professor expounded to them the portion of Holy Scripture which had been read at "first table." After this there was half an hour's recreation, and then half an hour's singing lesson.

Thursday was a holiday, and the students usually passed this day at their country house outside the town.

* At Douai the Old Testament was read through and expounded twelve times, and the New Testament sixteen times in three years.

But on other days, after this very brief recreation, they returned to their studies; or rather to their spiritual exercises; for immediately after the singing lesson they went to chapel to recite the Litany of Our Lady for the conversion of England.

Prayer for England was a great part of the life of these Colleges, these training-schools of martyrs; and it is to them we owe it that the tradition of constant intercession for the return of our beloved country to the Faith has never died out. Now, thank God! it is assuming proportions such as were never known of old; but who knows if we do not owe this grace, too, to the persevering, constant, undaunted intercession that went up to His Throne from these hearts of fire during England's darkest days?

After the Litanies followed half an hour's spiritual reading, each by himself in his room; and then came an hour's repetition of studies with the Prefects. All then recited the Rosary, and the rest of the afternoon was given, like the morning, to the schools and to private study. It is to be hoped that the students had some little way to walk to the schools, for otherwise they must have suffered greatly from want of exercise.

We can indeed readily believe that Lewis Owen (the Protestant writer* to whom we owe many interesting details about our martyr and the Colleges abroad) does not exaggerate so much as usual when he says: "Many fall sick and dye, by reason of the unwholesomeness of the air and want of exercise, for they haue no liberty or recreation,

* "The Running Register, recording A true relation of the State of the English Colledges, seminaries, and cloysters in all forraine parts. Together with a briefe and compendious discourse of the liues, Practices, Coozenage, Impostures, and Deceits of all our English Monks, Friers, Jesuites, and seminarie Priests in generall," by Lewis Owen, London. *Printed for R. Milburne, and are to be sold at the great south doore of Paul's.* 1626.

but by Thursday afternoon in their garden-house; neither have they any gardens or walks near their Colledge, and to go forth are they not permitted, save to schoole; unless it be in the Passion-week or against some great Feast, for then the Rector or Father Prefect will give leave to five or six of them at a time to go to visit some Image or other that is in great honour in that city, and to mumble over their beads upon their knees before it; but they must return in due time, and speake with no man or woman in the streets."

Supper was at seven in the summer, and in winter at eight. Exposition of Holy Scripture at second table; in this way the whole Bible was commented on in two years. After supper the students recited the Litany of the Saints again for the conversion of England, and a quarter of an hour's private examination of conscience closed the day's exercises.

Bedtime was nine o'clock in the summer and ten in the winter, so that a little more than seven hours' sleep was all the students were allowed. Before they retired to rest, the Prefect read aloud the points of the morrow's meditation.

The students who were in holy orders recited the Divine Office morning and evening at fixed times, and of course every priest said his daily Mass.

On Saturday evenings all went to Confession, and on Sunday there was a general Communion; while during dinner one of the students preached a sermon from the refectory pulpit. Every other Friday a spiritual conference, lasting three-quarters of an hour, was given on the glorious vocation to which they were called, the end and aim for which they were preparing, the glories of martyrdom, and the like. Thus were they taught by the contemplation of our Lord's most sacred Passion to drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism.

There were not wanting special preparations and helps for the arduous and difficult life before them. Twice a week was held a controversial disputation to prepare them to meet the arguments of the English heretics, one of these being on Sunday, and lasting an hour and a half. There was a monthly disputation of Theology or Philosophy, which lasted the whole day. Finally, a yearly retreat of spiritual exercises was held during the long vacation, to enable them to give themselves up uninterruptedly for some days to the great work of their individual sanctification.

In the mother-house at Rheims, which gave the pattern to the Colleges, Allen insisted much on the necessity of this. "We must needs confess," he writes,* "that all these things have come upon our country through our sins. We ought therefore to do penance and confess our sins, not in a perfunctory manner, as we used to do when for custom's sake we confessed once a year; but we should go into our whole past life, and perform the spiritual exercises under the Fathers of the Society, in order to the perfect examination of our consciences, and choose a holier state of life, and one more fitted to secure our own salvation and that of others. We should likewise enter into a holy union with these fathers or brothers, so as to pray unceasingly with many for our Church and country, and the afflicted Catholics who live there; and we should excite ourselves to pity and tears for them; but above all for those who are perishing so wretchedly at home, and then consider in what way we, even we, may be able to snatch some of them from ruin, remembering that this would cover the multitude of our sins."

The Jesuit Fathers who had charge of the Valladolid

* "Historical Introduction to the Douai Diaries," by Dr Knox, p. xxxix.

College certainly did not neglect this great means of grace, so dear and so familiar to them above all other religious. They laboured to instil ever more and more zeal in the hearts of their students, and thus to fit them to labour and live in all things "*ad majorem Dei gloriam*."

It was not for six months after the student had entered the College that he took the missionary oath, and indeed in all probability, for reasons that will appear later on, it was never administered to John Roberts.

It ran as follows: "I, N——, student of the English College of N——, considering the signal benefits which our Lord God has done me, and specially in bringing me out of my country, which is so vexed with heresy, and making me a member of His Catholic Church; desiring not to be altogether ungrateful to such great mercy of our Lord, have determined to offer myself wholly to His Divine service, as far as in me lies, for the fulfilment of the end of this English College. I promise and swear to Almighty God that, with His Divine grace and favour, I will receive in due time holy orders, and return to England to procure the conversion of the souls of my countrymen, whenever it shall seem good to the Superiors of the College, in conformity with its institution, to send me thither."

The year that John Roberts entered the College was a year of progress and a year of mourning. In January 1598 the town of Valladolid, at the request of Philip II., promised to help the College with monthly contributions.

The Chapel, too, was enlarged, owing, as we have said, to a pious legacy. In August or September several young students came (as every year at this time) from Douai and St Omer to continue their studies at Valladolid.

It was a year of mourning, for not only did the College

lose a very holy member of the community, one of the Temporal Coadjutors or lay brothers of the Society, but it had to mourn the death of the King, who, with such generosity and affection, had maintained, encouraged, and protected it. Philip II. died two days before John Roberts arrived at Valladolid. He must have found the town full of excitement and mourning; it was the King's birthplace and his favourite residence. We do not mean to speak here of the life and character of the departed monarch (of all kings perhaps the most grossly maligned and misrepresented), but simply of his connection with the English College of St Alban. To this his aid, his protection, and his alms had never been wanting. He had indeed been gracious and kingly to these English exiles (who, in their turn, never forgot that on his brow had once been set the circlet of their country's sovereignty), and it was with deep and sincere grief that they mourned his loss. On the 9th of December (a day afterwards to be otherwise memorable in our martyr's life) the students sang a great requiem for the late King in their College Church; and two of the students were deputed to read an address of loyal welcome to his son and successor. We are told that they were most kindly received by Philip III.*

We cannot end this brief sketch of St Alban's, Valladolid, without mentioning two details left us by Lewis Owen, which are of particular interest. "They have," he writes, "the English Martyrs painted in their chapels, with green palms in their hands and crowns of glory on their heads, and have here many relics of their martyrs . . . and a piece of old *Tiburn*, which they keep for a holy Relic, because many of their Society were martyred upon it."

* "Annual Letters of the Society of Jesus," now in the British Museum. See Foley, "Collectanea," I. xxi. *et seq.*

"I saw in this College," he adds, "a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary spreading out her mantle with both her hands over many Jesuites that kneeled unto her, with this inscription overhead, '*Anglia Dos Mariae*' (England is the Dower of the Virgin Mary), and the Jesuites presenting a paper into her hands wherein was written, '*Sub umbra alarum tuarum manebimus donec transeat iniquitas*' (Under the shadow of thy wings will we abide until this tyranny be overpast)."

Thus it was before the relics of his fellow-martyrs, before the image of Mary, represented as the protectress of her dower, that John Roberts knelt day by day in the Chapel of St Alban's College, and learned that the Faith which he had so lately embraced was worth living for and worth dying for, learned to despise the world and pant for sufferings, learned to die to himself and live for Christ alone. And so faithful was he to the light, so prudent a steward of the graces he had received, that soon he was deemed worthy of another call, yet higher and more precious, even that which fell upon the ear of the young man who came to Jesus, and whom Jesus loved.

CHAPTER III.

VOCATION.

To those who were looking forward so anxiously and praying so fervently for the conversion of England, one thought must often have come. It was the remembrance of those first missionaries of our people, those black-robed monks who brought the Gospel from Rome to Britain in the sixth century. Surely, as the Benedictines were the destined instruments in the country's conversion of old, so it might be again! But the great Order was dying out in the land; one or two old men dragged on a weary life in chains, and that was all. Westminster had fallen, Glastonbury and Canterbury with their sisters were no more, the Divine Office was silenced, the Abbey in ruins, the abomination of desolation set up in the sanctuary. Who could hope to revive the splendour of old days?

Feeling this most deeply as they did, yet those who loved to look back on the beautiful age of England's faith felt that her Church, if once restored, would never be the same to them if there were lacking representatives of the Fathers who founded her; felt, too, that if such monks as Augustine and Lawrence, Mellitus and Paulinus, were to return to the land, there would be more hope of her conversion than by any other means.

There were other causes—less happy ones—which made men yearn after the old Order, the old Order which had

Pax for its watchword and rule, and was linked with all that was noblest in England's past. Bitter dissensions were raging amid the secular clergy of England and the Jesuit missionaries. There is no need, thank God, to enter into the details of these disputes and factions; those who wish to do so will find more than enough of them in the pages of Tierney and Law.* The world-wide organisation, the position at Rome, the superior training and *prestige* of the Society, had wakened fierce jealousies in the hearts of the secular clergy. Even in Wisbech Castle, where the confessors of Christ lay in bonds, these unhappy dissensions were miserably prominent, and matters had only been made worse by the appointment of an Archpriest, who was to govern the secular clergy instead of a Bishop, but could take no important step without consulting the Jesuit Superior in England.

This appointment, due, it was thought, to the policy of Father Persons, was openly opposed by several leading men among the clergy, and at the very time that our hero entered the College of Valladolid two of these "Appellants" (as they were called) were on their way to Rome to protest against the jurisdiction of the Archpriest, and plead for Episcopal Superiors.

Political differences underlay and embittered, if they did not cause, these conflicts; the Jesuits were in favour of a Spanish succession to the Crown, while the opposite party looked to the son of Mary Queen of Scots as the most fitting successor to Elizabeth.

* Law, "Conflicts of the Jesuits and Seculars in the Reign of Elizabeth" (David Nutt): Tierney-Dodd, vols. iv. and v. Both these authors are hostile to the Jesuits. Their side has been taken by Father Plowden, "Remarks on a Book entitled Memoirs of Gregorio Panzani," Liege, 1794, and Dr Thomas Worthington, President of Douai College, in an exceedingly rare book entitled "Relation of Sixteen Martyrs glorified in England in Twelve Months," Doway, 1601. (An almost unique copy is preserved at St Mary's College, Oscott.)

It may well be imagined that these troubles in England did not fail to find an echo in the Seminaries abroad, where the future secular clergy were being trained for their mission by Fathers of the Society of Jesus. The English College at Rome * had become notorious more than once for open rebellion, and though at present things were quiet at Valladolid, who could tell how long it would last? There is no doubt that these miserable quarrels were stimulated and encouraged by the English Government, ever watchful to take advantage of the weaknesses of Catholics, and specially hating the Jesuits on account of their Spanish leanings. Their spies penetrated even into the Seminaries, and there studiously fomented dissensions. As to the merits of the case, the whole matter is so involved that it is exceedingly difficult for us to form a certain judgment. Both sides were unhappily exceedingly violent in language, and unsparing in personalities, and both were not unjustly declared at Rome to be "*terribiles*."†

But Elizabethans were more extreme than we can easily conceive nowadays, both in goodness and the reverse, and the violence of the controversy does not bear the same gravity as it would have done at a later time. Still there is no doubt that these miserable quarrels did more to hinder the conversion of England than the edicts of persecutors, or the tortures of Newgate and Tyburn; and if the blood of the martyrs was poured out like water, with

* Foley, "Pilgrim-Book of the English College at Rome," prints the report of Cardinal Sega, who visited the College to inquire into the cause of these disturbances. He sums up very strongly in favour of the Jesuits. Tierney and Law give the other side.

Father Persons was appointed Rector in 1597, and completely restored order, a fact his enemies find it difficult to explain away.—Tierney-Dodd, vol. iii. pp. lxxviii-lxxxiii.

† See an excellent article by F. Morris in the *Dublin Review*, April 1890. He candidly deplores the "hard, uncharitable language" and "terrible accusations made against the personal character of his opponents" by Father Persons. The other side was even worse.

apparently so little result, it must sorrowfully be attributed to the scandals caused by the divisions among the Catholics themselves.

Still God here, as ever, knew how to draw good out of evil; and the story we are about to tell is not the only instance of this truth at the period we are speaking of. "Good out of evil" we repeat, for there is little doubt that to the weary controversies and disputes which distracted English Catholics at this moment, the revival of the English Benedictines is greatly due.

Men of peace longed for a haven where they might be secure from these conflicts, where they would be identified with neither one side nor the other, where they might work out their own sanctification and labour to win souls, without the exciting distractions of political intrigue. Not that the majority of either Jesuits or Seculars were mixed up in these things, not that there were not hundreds on either side who kept aloof from them, not that most of the very leaders themselves were not men of God, and sincerely zealous for souls (it would be entirely to mistake and misrepresent history to assert anything else); but that it was felt to be well to find an escape which might save men from even the possibility of being drawn into controversies which hindered God's work, and caused joy to the enemies of the Church.

This, if we mistake not, was one of the causes (but only one) which began to turn men's thoughts to the Benedictine Order.

Another is suggested by the Protestant writer quoted in the last chapter. Owen asserts* that Dr Gifford, Dean of Lille,† and other of the anti-Jesuit party, fearful that if the

* *Op. cit.* p. 34.

† He became afterwards a Benedictine, and later Archbishop of Rheims.

English Benedictines died out, the Society would (in the event of England's return to the Faith *) claim their lands and possessions as a reward for its services. They therefore earnestly urged the necessity of continuing the line of Benedictines.

There is some ground for this opinion, it must be frankly confessed, in the works of Father Persons.

Watson, one of the most violent of the writers on the "Appellant" side, says in his "Decacordon of ten Quodlibetical Questions," † that according to the Jesuits' scheme for a High Court of Reformation in England, no Orders but themselves and the Capuchins were to be admitted, and all the Abbey lands, etc., were to be administered by a Court of six Vicars, four Jesuits, and two Secular Priests, who would allow from this common fund stipends to all the Bishops and Clergy. Persons, however, in his "Manifestation of the great Folly and bad Spirit of Certayne in England calling themselves Secular Priests," ‡ utterly denies this, and says he proposed to restore all the approved religious Orders. An examination of the book, however, shows that Watson had some ground for his assertions.§

* It must be remembered that all parties among the Catholics, whether they looked to Spain or Scotland for deliverance, confidently expected the restoration of the whole of the kingdom to Catholic unity, once Elizabeth was dead: and if some of the exiles intrigued for the invasion of England and the deposition of the Queen, it was for the sake of religion, which they felt to be the *summum bonum*. Just as the Protestants deposed James II., and gave the Crown to William of Orange a century later, so some Catholics would have now treated Elizabeth. And the bull of St Pius V., declaring the Queen deposed, gave them far more justification than had the plotters of the "glorious Protestant Revolution."

† By W. W., 1602. Watson was executed for high treason in 1603.

‡ It purports to be written "by priests living in obedience" (published 1602). It is undoubtedly by the hand of Persons.

§ The real title of this remarkable work is "A Memorial for Reformation, etc., containing certaine notes and advertisements, etc., gathered and set down by R. P." 1596.

In Chapter V. of this able scheme for re-establishing the Church in England, as soon as the accession of a Catholic sovereign might make this possible, Persons says that the weak spot in the restoration of religion under Mary was the lack of restitution of the Abbey lands. In this he is undoubtedly right. They must be restored this time, he continues, and "A Council of Reformation" might administer them. "And the reason why it were not convenient to return these lands and livings again to the same Orders of Religion that had them before is evident to all men, to wit, for that the time and state of England are far other and different from that they were when these lands were given, and consequently do require different provision and disposition of things, conformed to the present necessity and utility of the realm: as, for example, the world knoweth that the most part of all Abbey lands appertained in the old time to the religion of St Bennet, of which Order at this time there are very few of the English nation to occupy or possess the same; and to bestow them on strangers of that religion (England having so many other necessities) were very inconvenient: and besides this it may be so that many Houses and Families of that Order of St Bennet or of St Bernard, or of the monastical profession (though in itself most holy), will neither be possible nor necessary in England presently upon the first Reformation; but rather in place of many of them, good Colleges, Universities, Seminaries, and Schools, for increasing of our Clergy, as also of divers houses of other Orders, that do deal more in preaching and helping of souls, and for that respect more necessary to the clergy of England in this great work at the beginning and for many years after."*

* This work was reprinted in 1690 under the title of "The Jesuits' Memorial for the Intended Reformation of England," with notes and

Father Persons goes on to say * that "as to the old and ancient religions, one House in a shire with a moderate revenue would be sufficient." The people would found more later on, if more were needed.

However, many people did not agree with the writer as to the comparative uselessness of the old Orders. Certain it is, that some ten years before the date of which we write, men's eyes had begun to turn towards the venerable Order to which England owed the Faith. Some of the Roman students, weary of the strife in their College, sought for admission to the Order of St Benedict so early as 1587.

In 1588 the first of these, Dom Gregory Sayr, once a student at Cambridge, and afterwards a member of the English College at Rome, was professed in the great Abbey of Monte Cassino.

He had gone to the fountain-head of the Order, thence to draw forth the waters of life, and in turn to pour them out upon his country. But he never set foot in England; an untimely death cut him off at Venice in 1602, while

introduction by a Protestant, Edward Gee, Rector of St Benedict's, Paul's Wharf (London, Richard Chisnel, at the Rose and Crown, St Paul's Church-yard). He makes the following comment on this passage (p. 59): "After the Jesuit has contended so earnestly in the first part of this chapter for the Restitution of Abbey lands upon reason of conscience, one cannot but wonder that he should not be for restoring them to their primitive owners; . . . the plain reason is this: the Jesuits being an upstart Order since the suppression of Monasteries by King Henry VIII., none of those Abbey lands did belong to them, nor could be restored to them: and to have 'em all given up to the Benedictines and the other old Orders is what a Jesuit could never bear; and therefore he is for having them all sequestered into a common stock for six or seven years, in which time no question need be made but the Jesuits would have run down all the old Orders as useless to England, and would have swallowed the whole morsel of Abbey lands themselves."

The reader will remember that the writer is a Protestant, and will also bear in mind that there was a good deal to say for adapting the revenues of some at least of the ancient monasteries to the benefit of University education, and of more modern religious Societies.

* P. 77.

he was on his way to his native country. Benedictine writers loved to compare his fate to that of his illustrious patron, who himself desired so greatly to evangelise our country, and set out on his road thither, but was also prevented by God from accomplishing his purpose.

Others, however, carried on his work, and among them the most prominent were Dom Thomas Preston of Monte Cassino, Dom Anselm Beech of S. Justina of Padua, and Dom Athanasius Martin of Cava.

Thus the most illustrious houses of Italy joined in the noble work of giving new English sons to St Benedict.

The Cassinese Congregation or "Congregation of St Justina of Padua" as it was also called, was at this time in the full splendour of religious fervour and material prosperity, and it would be interesting to dwell on this part of our subject, did not our plan recall us to Spain. But before leaving it we must recall the important fact that so early as 1594 the General Chapter of the Cassinese Congregation petitioned the Holy See to let them send their English subjects to their own country, that they might labour in the mission-field. This, however, was at the time refused, on account of the disturbances between the clergy and the Society. In this year, too, Cardinal Allen, the large-hearted and noble founder of the English Seminaries of Douai and Rome, wrote a beautiful letter to one of the young monks, Dom Athanasius Martin of Cava, in which he warmly congratulated him on his holy vocation, and encouraged him to perseverance.

"Let others think and say what they like," the Cardinal writes, "of this your most holy state of life, I would have you persuaded I most heartily espouse your affairs, and mightily like this resolution you have taken of engaging in religion, and hope that you are taken from this wicked world to contribute to the restoration of this most holy

Order which formerly so flourished in our country, and your pen and genius will render you an ornament thereof; and therefore, so much the more profit you make in that most holy discipline, so much the more I shall love you, and you will have no occasion to repent you of this resolution."*

O si sic omnes! For, like all good works in the Church, the revival of the Benedictines was to meet with much opposition, and, what is always hardest to bear, opposition from men of holy life and earnest zeal for God.

So it was to be with those whom God was calling to the Order from out of the Spanish Seminary.

When Roberts arrived at Valladolid, the seed was already sown, and was germinating in several young and ardent hearts. Among those companions to whom he was most drawn would naturally be those who had been like himself Oxonians. There is a link which binds Oxford men together all the world over, and this is the ardent love they all bear their Alma Mater, a love which will not seem strange to any one who has had the privilege of even visiting the great University. And among the Oxonians at Valladolid one young man was specially noteworthy, both from his age, which was more mature than that of most of the students, but chiefly from his striking personality.

Tall and burly in figure, his frank open face and pleasant smile won all hearts, while a certain open frankness of character, especially English, made him respected as much as he was loved. This young man was the future martyr, Ven. Mark Barkworth, a name specially dear to Benedictines for reasons that will presently appear.

Sprung from a respectable Lincolnshire family, he had

* Weldon, p. 41.

been brought up a Protestant. A paper in the Archives of the See of Westminster (hitherto unpublished) * gives a curious story about his young days. A woman, who was supposed to be gifted with the spirit of prophecy, once saw him as a boy, and predicted that he would come to the gallows. This dreadful prediction so weighed on the minds of his family that it embittered the life of the young man, and from very shame he determined to leave home, and go somewhere where he would not be known, or be liable to be pointed at as a future malefactor. He therefore went to Oxford, and spent some years there in study. But for some cause which is unknown, he determined to leave the University, and betake himself to foreign parts. Providence led him to Douai, where the Seminary of Cardinal Allen had been re-established this previous year, *i.e.* 1593. Here he made friends with the Professors of the Seminary, and especially with Dr Edmund Arrowsmith, a man of great piety and learning, who taught Moral Theology in the College, and is best known through his nephew, the Jesuit martyr, Ven. Edmund Arrowsmith. His conversations had a great effect on the young student, who was then in his twenty-third year. Divine grace did the rest, and before long he was reconciled to the Church, and "grounded in solid spirituality" by Father George, a Flemish Jesuit.† The Valladolid records are mistaken in saying he was reconciled by Dr Arrowsmith, who was, however, one of his dearest friends. He stayed at Douai ‡ about a year and a half, and then was forced to leave for Rome, owing to a

* Archiv. Westmin., ix. 292.

† From a letter of his own, quoted More, "Hist. Prov. Angl.," lib. vi. n. 14.

‡ Challoner and Foley say at Rheims. But the English College was transferred back to Douai in 1593, and Barkworth can only have left England in the middle of 1594.

plague which was then raging in the Flemish University town. But he only remained a few months in the eternal city, and arrived at Valladolid on the 16th of December 1596, with five companions, Douai students like himself. As he was furnished with letters from Father Alfonso Agazzari, the Rector of the College at Rome, and from Father Creswell, he was of course admitted to the Seminary, and at the time we are speaking of he was preparing soon to return to his native land.

In Rome he must have heard much of the new movement, and he was exceedingly full of it. He longed also to join the holy sons of St Benedict, and fight under the banner of that great leader; and he began to seek the means of accomplishing his desire. There has been hitherto no little mystery as to the exact nature of his connection with the Order, for we know that he was executed in the Benedictine habit, "which by some means he had provided or gotten, and had his tonsure accordingly made."*

As Challoner says, this shows that he was a Benedictine, at least in desire, if not in effect.† And Weldon, who says that "he challenges the first place of those who entered the Spanish Congregation, though he neither lived nor was clothed in any monastery," supports this statement by referring to his well-known zeal for the Order, and by the fact "that he was a great furtherer and concurring of those who engaged amongst the Spanish monks," so that his wearing the habit at his death manifested "the secrets of his heart and his intentions in regard of the Benedictine Order."

However, as Father Henry More, the historian of the English province of the Society of Jesus, points out, Barkworth not only wore the habit, but asserted on the

* Weldon, p. 43.

† Challoner, i. p. 391.

scaffold that he was a monk of the Order of St Benedict. This he would hardly have done had he not more ground for it than his affection for the Order.

Mr Gillow, in his valuable "Biographical Dictionary of English Catholics," says,* "The Benedictines claim him as a member of their Order, but are unable to produce any record of his profession"; and this is perfectly true.

We have been happy enough, however, to glean some facts which throw quite a new light on the question. At Oscott College is a paper copied by Alban Butler for Bishop Challoner, "from a MS., ill-writ and scarce legible, of the Benedictines here" [*i.e.* at Douai]. It runs as follows: "Going from Rome towards Spain to be admitted into the English College at Valladolid, as he travelled alone through Italy, the devil appeared to him in the shape of a hermit, and dissuaded him from that course of life. After, St Bennet appeared to him, comforted him, counselled him to proceed, and foretold him the great good that Order should do in England, and that he should die a martyr, exhorting him when he came to that glorious conflict to die in his habit. This apparition he told a Spanish captain named Spinula, after his condemnation, being his fellow-prisoner in Bridewell, who, coming into Spain, rehearsed it to the General of the Benedictines on his oath.†

* Vol. i. p. 130.

† This was Hortensio Spinola, a Genoese gentleman in the service of Spain. His more famous son Frederigo was Admiral of a small Spanish fleet which harassed the ports of England. He sent his father into England to spy out the ports. He went to London, and thence by horse to Plymouth, Dartmouth, Torbay, Poole, Portland, Southampton, Yarmouth, and Harwich, and was finally taken at Ipswich, and sent up to London to be examined by the Council. His declaration is dated April 10, 1599. He had sent full descriptions of these sea-ports to his son. He confessed on 5th February 1600 that he knew Fr. Creswell well, and had private conference with him. The younger Spinola was at Dunkirk in March 1599, viewing the haven and fortifying it, and had ships of war built there. Lord Cobham writes of the father (April 18, 1599), that "he is of as good a discourse as I have ever heard, tall, handsome, and a soldier" (Dom. Elizabeth, vol. cclxx. 81).

This, no doubt, is the "miraculous event" of which Yepes speaks, when he says, "Father Barkworth asked for the habit in our congregation of Spain, through a miraculous event which happened to him in connection with St Benedict; he could not obtain admittance to our monasteries by reasons of considerations then deemed important; but being a monk in desire and in heart, he made the tonsure and wore the habit at his execution."

This does not make the matter much clearer, but here the paper in the Westminster Archives previously quoted comes to our aid. By this we learn that at first, indeed, his endeavours to enter a monastery were of no avail, the considerations of which Yepes speaks being doubtless the difficulties felt as to sending monks on the English mission, the petition of the Cassinese having been rejected, and the special features of the Benedictine vocation being such as could with difficulty be reconciled with the exigencies of missionary life, as it had then to be practised in England.* Barkworth, however, laid the whole matter before his confessor, lamenting that it seemed as if it were God's will that he should not follow the vocation, which nevertheless he felt so strong within his soul.

His confessor advised him, with great wisdom, to yield to this disposition of Providence, and set out on his way to England, and there to labour to gain the souls of his people, friends, and family. If he were well received, and his work prospered, he would take it as a sign that God was co-operating with him, and that he was where He wished him to be, but if not, he should return and again endeavour to obtain admission to the Order. He acquiesced in this advice, and took no further steps to enter religion at once, though he earnestly encouraged

* Yepes, *op. cit.*, vol. i., "Centuria Secunda," cap. iii. p. 445, etc.

those among his companions in whom he saw signs of the same vocation; and among them the hero of this story.

His love and tenderness for his friends was remarkable, but not so remarkable as his charity towards any who might do him wrong. He showed this charity in a striking manner towards a companion who had been specially unkind to him. The poor young man fell ill of the plague, and Barkworth, without fear of the contagion, nursed him tenderly till his death, and even buried him with his own hands. He is said to have shown similar courage and charity at Douai under like circumstances.

It is painful to have to add that his love and gratitude to his Jesuit friends and superiors seems to have had to bear at this time a very hard trial. His devotion to the Order of St Benedict brought upon him much suspicion and dislike, though we can hardly believe the writers who assert that he had to endure a persecution which went even to the length of personal violence. This is no place to enter into the details of the miserable story.* Suffice it to say, that the future martyr never allowed the injustice of one or two men to mar his love for the great Society to which he owed so much.

Father Barkworth was dismissed from the College in 1599, and set out on his way to England in company with another young priest, whose name was also to be inscribed one day in the catalogue of the Church's martyrs, as the Venerable Thomas Garnet, S.J.

The would-be monk, when dismissed from the College,

* It is recounted with full detail, and no doubt with gross exaggeration, in the writings of the Appellants against the Jesuits: notably in "A Reply to Father Persons' Libel," by W. C. (perhaps Francis Barneby), p. 69, published in 1603, and in Watson's "Decacordon," p. 93, whence it has found its way into the works of Bell, the Protestant controversialist.

was still suffering from a quartan fever, and was very weak. His health was not improved during his journey, for he and his companion had often to sleep out in the open air in unhealthy and malarious districts, owing to the churlish prudence of the inhabitants of the towns which they passed on their way, who refused to receive the young travellers within their gates, on account of the plague, which was then raging throughout Spain, and especially at Valladolid.

God, however, had not forgotten His servants, and this very trial was the means of the accomplishment of Barkworth's ardent desire. One day they arrived at a monastery of Benedictines, where they were kindly welcomed and taken in. The traditional hospitality of the Order, which forbade the monks to shut their doors against the pilgrim missionaries, even though they might be bringing the plague with them, was rewarded, for they were receiving angels unawares. Barkworth ventured to confide the desire of his soul to the good Fathers, and they did all that was in their power to further his pious wish. They admitted him as a member of their community, and gave him all the privileges of an "Oblate or Votary" of the Order. It was something more than making him a Confrater (a privilege enjoyed by many seculars, and a similar institution to that of the Tertiaries of the Mendicant Orders), for attached to it was the great favour of being allowed to make the monastic vows at the hour of death, and to be reckoned among the professed sons of St Benedict.

Thus the whole thing is explained, and we understand the exultant joy and pride with which the martyr clothed himself in our Father's sacred habit on the day of his death, and proclaimed aloud that he was a monk of the Order of St Benedict.

But there is one point yet to be solved: which was this charitable Community which admitted the martyr to its ranks, all unknown to Yepes and other chroniclers? The Westminster Paper does not give the name, but it is supplied for us by another unpublished document lately discovered in the Archives of the Monastery of San Domingo de Silos.*

Here in a list of the martyrs of the Spanish Congregation in England is the name of Mark Barkworth, with the invaluable note attached: "*Monachus novitius in Monasterio S. Marice de Errache receptus.*"

This monastery is the famous Abbey of Hyrache, which had a College of student monks belonging to the whole Spanish Congregation, and enjoyed the titles and privileges of a University. Its buildings are still intact, though they are no longer in Benedictine hands. They are occupied at present by the Clerks Regular of Pious Schools, founded by St Joseph Calasanz, who have fixed their Scholasticate there. Its situation is near the French frontier, not far from Estella, in the province of Navarre.

Thus it was owing to the charity of the monks of Hyrache that Ven. Mark Barkworth was able to say as he stood on the scaffold: "I come here to die, being a Catholic, a priest, and a religious man, belonging to the Order of St Benedict, by which Order this Kingdom of England was first converted."†

* This was the repository of the Archives of the Congregation. There are many valuable papers referring to the English Benedictines still to be found here. This one has been kindly communicated to us by the learned Archivist of the Monastery, Dom Édouard Buchot, O.S.B.

† Quoted from an eye-witness of the martyrdom, in a letter of Fr. Henry Garnet, S.J., to the General of the Society, March 11, 1601. (Foley, "Collectanea," ii. p. 1364). Fr. Garnet does not seem to have known how Barkworth came to be a monk. Even Fr. Augustine Baker, in his MS. "Work on the English Mission," can only conjecture. It must be noted that the holy martyr was devoted to the Society. He writes himself: "I return my fullest thanks to the holy Society of Jesus, men of the

But this bright and steadfast martyr was not the only would-be monk among our hero's companions at Valladolid in 1598.

The eternal Wisdom, sweetly and mightily disposing all things, was preparing other hearts by secret inspirations, and even by miraculous interventions, to embrace the movement which Providence destined to work so glorious an end. Nothing is more interesting (though it be not astonishing to one who knows anything of God's dealings with souls) than to mark how the Divine seed was sown secretly and silently in one heart after another till all at once, at the appointed time, it sprang up and bore much fruit. Among the students of Valladolid was that John Jones, already a close friend of our hero's, at St John's College. At the beginning of the Long Vacation Jones had left Oxford after a residence of five years. He, too, had found his way into the Church, having been reconciled about June 1596 by the well-known Jesuit Father John Gerard.* Father Gerard had sent him to Spain with two companions a few months later, and he was admitted into the College on December 13, 1596—being then twenty-two years of age. He was a young man of remarkable talents, as his after-history proved, and was specially noteworthy for his gift of persuasive eloquence. His handsome personal appearance and charming disposition endeared him to all who knew him.

highest merit and admirable virtues, whom from my heart I ever venerate and love, and would that all did the same."—Foley, "Records," i. p. 416.

* *Liber primi examinis*, Valladolid MS., see Appendix C. Father Gerard seems to have met him first at Oxford, and to have there solved the religious doubts which the brilliant young man found his Professors unable to cope with. He must have reconciled him, however, in the Clink prison, where he was confined from 1594 to 1597, but had full liberty to see visitors, and even to say Mass.—See his Life by Fr. Morris, p. 198.

The story of his vocation to the Benedictine Order is very striking. On his way to Spain, the first night he passed at sea he was favoured with a remarkable dream. This so affected him that he spoke of it to one of his companions, but would not divulge what he had seen, saying he would wait until the event had proved his dream true.*

However, one day, probably some two years after his admission to the College,† about the time of Roberts' arrival at Valladolid, he was walking in the city with a Jesuit companion. In the street they happened to meet the Benedictine Abbot of San Martino de Compostella in Galicia, who was staying in Valladolid, at the great Abbey of his Order, San Benito. The Abbot (Don Diego de Ramos) was walking quietly along, accompanied by another monk. At the sight of these religious, impelled by an irresistible force, the young student ran, and in the sight of every one in the street, and to the utter astonishment of his companion, cast himself at the Abbot's feet, and begged to be admitted among his sons. The Abbot, after considerable doubts, recognised the hand of God, and expressed himself willing to receive the young man. "But a vocation so strange seemed most unlikely, and the Fathers of the Society could hardly believe that the Abbot . . . had not in some way or other been instrumental in bringing upon them the loss of one from whom they were expecting great things. This appeared the more likely, as the reputation of the young foreigner was well known in Valladolid, and so it was thought best to refer the

* See an article by Dom Gasquet, O.S.B., in *Downside Review*, vol. iv. (January 1885).

† Dom Gasquet thinks it was soon after his arrival, and says he had never seen a Benedictine before he met the Abbot. If this be so, he was kept nearly three years before being allowed to follow his vocation, which seems improbable.

case to the Bishop. To him the youth declared the certainty of his religious vocation to the Order of St Benedict, and recounted the vision he had been granted whilst on the ship coming to Spain, of the two Benedictines he had afterwards seen by accident in the streets of Valladolid. This made the truth of his Divine call apparent, and the Fathers of the Society joined in thanking Providence, which had so clearly pointed out the vocation of this youth of great promise."

All these examinations, however, took time, and so long did they take that John Jones was not destined to be the first student of Valladolid admitted into the Benedictine Order.

This honour was reserved for John Bradshaw* (or White), a young man whose admirable conduct had caused his Superiors to make him one of the Prefects in the College. Like that of Barkworth and Jones, his vocation seems to have been due to a special interposition of Divine Providence. In this same winter of 1598-9 he was struck down by a dangerous malady, which seemed carrying him fast to the gates of death. He was about twenty-one at this time, and it appeared as if he was to be cut off in the very flower of his early manhood, before he had been able to do anything for the cause he had so deeply at heart.

But during his illness he was inspired by God to make a vow of entering religion, if his life were spared. Apparently he made this vow for the Benedictine Order, being moved thereto by a visit paid to the College by the

* A MS. account (hitherto overlooked) of the vocation of the first monks in Spain, written by Don Leander Jones himself, and preserved in the Archives of Monte Cassino, is our authority for this part of the history, which has been much confused by writers.—"Ex codice Miscellan. erudit," MS. Cass., tom. iv. fol. 397-399. We have also consulted the MSS. records of the Valladolid College.

Abbot of St Martin's, and very likely, too, by the story of his friend's wonderful vocation. But having taken the missionary oath, he decided to make a condition as to the Order, promising God to become a Benedictine, if there were good hope that he might afterwards be sent by his Superiors to the English Mission. When he recovered, he confided this vow to the Superiors of the College, and begged them to help him to become a Benedictine if possible; if not, to recommend him to some other Order. They do not seem to have opposed him in any way, still less to have wished to win him for their own Society (a course which is, indeed, strictly forbidden to Jesuits by their rules); but, on the other hand, they recommended him to the Prior of San Benito de Valladolid, and begged him to receive the young man, and later on to send him to England if it were possible.

It is important to note these facts, which are vouched for us by Dom Leander Jones himself, as it shows that at first, at any rate, the Jesuits did not oppose a serious vocation to the Benedictines, though they naturally objected to a Seminary which was founded for missionary work becoming a recruiting-ground for members of a cloistered and contemplative Order.

All this happened in April 1599. In May the young man was already on his way across Spain to Compostella, the city of Santiago, where he received the holy habit on the 26th of that month, the Feast of the Benedictine Apostle of England, St Augustine of Canterbury. From this joyful coincidence he took his religious name, the future monk and apostle being henceforth known as Frater Augustinus a Sco. Joanne.*

These vocations made a profound impression on the

* See Appendix C.

whole College of St Alban, and their effects were destined to be wide and far reaching.

It was not, however, until the 20th of October, and not till after many trials and difficulties, that John Jones was allowed to enter the Order; and before he could do so another had passed in before him.

This was our hero himself, who was thus the third to apply for entrance to the Order in Spain.

John Roberts was fired with the desire of embracing the monastic life soon after his admission to the College. The disputes which raged high over the case of Father Barkworth must have had the natural effect of making the students range themselves on one side or the other. Most seem to have sympathised with the young priest; at any rate Roberts did, and his friendship with Jones will naturally have had a great influence on his mind. For a time he kept his vocation secret, but his soul burned within him as he heard his friends recount the miraculous visions which had inspired their own decisions, and as he witnessed the departure of Bradshaw for the Abbey of Saint Martin. Barkworth left the College in 1599, but his parting words, his fervent exhortations, his glowing panegyrics of the monastic life could not fade from his memory. The news of his reception at Hyrache, as of Bradshaw's clothing at Compostella; the latter's new name so suggestive of the ancient glories of England; his letters doubtless, full of the "*fervor novitius*," fired the heart of the young student, and made him long for the cloistered peace of San Martino. Incessantly he prayed for light and guidance; and to him, as to all who make this prayer with humble and sincere hearts, came at the predestined moment God's answer of power. The chief difficulty to him, as to his friends, was no doubt the possibility that this vocation might shut them off for ever from England.

Their hearts yearned for their brethren, and they could hardly bear to think of not being allowed to labour and suffer for the sake of their beloved country. But here a great act of faith was asked of them. The Benedictine Abbots might individually express their willingness to send them in due time to England; but after all, this decision rested not with them, but with the Holy See. The Spanish Congregation of San Benito de Valladolid was unique, we believe, in the Order, in taking a vow of perpetual enclosure; and how could such a vow be compatible with missionary life in a land where a monastery was an impossibility, where the habit could not be worn, and Choir could not be kept?

It might be doubted, too, if young men who seemed called to devote themselves to missionary life, whose hearts were glowing with the desire of active ministry and martyrdom, could really have a vocation to an austere and contemplative Order.

Such difficulties as these beset both Superiors and Postulants, and explain clearly enough the refusal to admit Mark Barkworth, who was the first to sue, and the hesitation felt in receiving the others. It is evident that Bradshaw, as well as our hero, and those who followed him, during the first years of the Benedictine movement, must have given themselves up blindly to God's call, and with full confidence in Him, have left to His Providence the care of combining and harmonising two vocations outwardly so different, yet both of which they felt so strongly.

The great thing for them was to obey the call to Religion that they heard within their souls; and as for the future, they could leave it safely in the hands of the loving Father Who alone knows what is best for His children, and Who alone can carry out His plans for them, "*fortiter et suaviter disponens omnia.*"

CHAPTER IV.

SANTIAGO.

IT is now time to give some account of the Royal Monastery of San Benito de Valladolid, and of the venerable and flourishing Congregation which took its name from this great house of our Order. It is needless, perhaps, to remark that in the Order of St Benedict the term "Congregation" signifies a confederacy of Abbeys and Priors, each independent as to its internal government and administration, but united together under one President (sometimes called Abbot-General or Arch-Abbot) for the purpose of maintenance of discipline and common action in matters that concerned the whole Congregation. The delegates of each Monastery meet together at stated intervals in General Chapter, and the President has the right and duty of making canonical visitations in the different Abbeys, with other powers differing in the various Congregations. The oldest Congregation was the English, which was now on the point of expiring, this having been founded in the fourteenth century. At the time of which we are writing, the most famous Benedictine Congregations were those of S. Justina di Padova in Italy, Bursfeld in Germany, and San Benito de Valladolid in Spain.

The Royal Monastery of San Benito owed its origin

to the enlightened zeal of Don Juan I. of Castille in 1390. At this time the religious Orders in the kingdom had sunk into a sad state of relaxation, owing to the innumerable wars, pestilences, and famines by which the country had been devastated. The Religious were reduced to beg their bread through the towns and villages of the kingdom, and naturally this state of affairs led to much relaxation of regular observance.

The King, wishing to remedy these abuses, set about seriously on the work of reform; and as to the Benedictines, he, with royal generosity, handed over to them his own palace or Alcazar at Valladolid, under the condition that the monks observed perpetual enclosure. The community was formed by gathering together the more observant monks from different Monasteries, notably from the famous Abbey of Sahagun, and was governed by a Prior. Its austerities and discipline soon made it famous throughout Europe, and it was not long before the Sovereign Pontiffs felt bound to modify in some points the excessive severity of the observance, particularly with regard to the vow of perpetual enclosure taken by the monks, and which was guarded as strictly as if they had been a community of women.

A few other Monasteries, moved by holy emulation, began to imitate the observance of San Benito; but it was not till the glorious period of the Catholic kings, whose rule over a united Spain was as memorable for religion as for material prosperity, that the reform of Valladolid began to spread widely among the other Monasteries, all of which became united to the royal foundation of Don Juan of Castille. The reform was introduced with great zeal into all the Monasteries of Castille, Leon, and Galicia, and penetrated also into a few of those of Navarre, Aragon, and Catalonia. The Con-

gregation of Valladolid was thus formed, and soon spread its beneficent influence from end to end of Spain. At first the rule as to only admitting Priories into the Union was strictly observed, so that the Abbeys that wished to join were forced to reduce themselves to the rank of Priories; but as this was found to be an obstacle to the progress of the Reform, it was soon changed. San Benito maintained its right of electing the Prior-General or President for the whole Congregation,* in spite of many protests on the part of the other Monasteries, down to the year 1609, when a Bull of Paul V. transferred this right to the whole Congregation (as was but just), and decided that the General might belong to any of the Monasteries forming the Union, and that no House had more rights in the election than the others. After this date San Benito de Valladolid became an Abbey; it had till then preserved its original constitution, and was governed by Priors.

At the time when John Roberts lived at Valladolid the General of the Congregation (which numbered some fifty Houses) was therefore still elected by the monks of San Benito from among their own number, and the Monastery had itself no Abbot. The number of monks had originally been limited to eighteen, but this impediment to its progress did not last long, and at the time of which we write it boasted of a very numerous community.

The splendid monastic church was begun in 1499, and finished some five years later. It still stands, but in how sad a state of desolation! The magnificent carved stalls of the choir have been carted away to the town Museum, as well as the great statue of St Benedict, once the object

* The last Prior-General, the Ven. Don Juan de San Juan, died at Montserrat in 1497, after introducing the Reform into that famous Abbey. He was succeeded by an Abbot-General.

of so much devotion, and before which our hero felt perhaps the first dawns of his holy vocation; for it is needless to say that San Benito (which was the chosen sepulture of Castilian royalty, as well as of the noblest grandees of the kingdom) has suffered, like all other religious houses in Spain, through the Revolution of 1836. The monks were then expelled, and the Abbey still remains a barrack. The splendid church, with its richly groined roof, its western choir gallery, and its treasures of art, was turned into a military storehouse; and about thirty years ago the lofty tower was wantonly pulled down by the degenerate sons of modern Spain, under the pretext that it was becoming unsafe. Happily, however, better days have dawned for San Benito. About two years ago the church was purified and restored to Divine worship, being handed over to the Superiors of the confraternity of our Lady of Mount Carmel, who had petitioned for it.

But at the time of our history San Benito was in the full tide of prosperity and renown; and the manifestations of the devotion, learning, and zeal of its monks attracted to it the noblest hearts of Spain. The famous chronicler, Don Antonio Yepes, was pursuing his laborious task in the silence of its splendid library and archivium, and it was here that he became linked by the closest bonds of friendship to the young and ardent English student, who sought to share in the peaceful joys of the Benedictine life, in order to fit himself (though all unconsciously) to take a splendid place in the pages of the chronicle of the Order that his friend was engaged in writing.

For the time had come for our hero to open out his heart to his Superiors, and to tell them that he too burned with desire to join the holy Order which had so powerfully attracted his friends, Barkworth, Jones, and

Bradshaw. What followed must be given in Dom Leander's own words.

"Shortly after this,"* he writes (*i.e.* shortly after the entry of Dom Augustine Bradshaw into the Order, in April 1599) "Father John de Mervinia, *alias* Roberts, who up to this time had concealed his desire to enter Religion, and had lived also quietly and without any disturbance, begged the Fathers to recommend him, too, to the Prior of Valladolid. So they sent him off from the College to the Monastery very early in the morning, and in the afternoon four or five of them presented themselves at the Monastery, and instead of the recommendation which charity obliged them to give to any pilgrim, they made so many accusations against him to the monks, that they quite frightened the Prior from his intention of admitting him with the hope of the priesthood and the English Mission. Father John, who found himself thus unjustly outwitted, asked the Prior and the monks whether, supposing the Jesuits would admit him back to the College as a student, in spite of their accusations, they would then believe that these accusations were mere calumnies. The monks promised this. So he goes back to the Fathers, and humbly prostrating himself before them, begs to be admitted again as a student of the Seminary, which he obtains, for they were exceedingly glad to do so, hoping that his return from the Monastery would altogether deter the others from thinking of becoming monks. But when the Prior of Valladolid saw that the Fathers of the Society received him back among their students, though they had accused him of being altogether unfit for the Priesthood, they understood that the Fathers had accused him thus for the sole purpose of preventing him from becoming a monk, so they admitted

* We translate from the Cassinese MS., previously quoted.

him again, and gave him the habit, with four other students who came with him.

"But these escaped from the Seminary in secret, and without the knowledge of their Superiors, for they saw from the care the Fathers had taken to prevent Roberts from becoming a monk, they would have no chance of success, if they acquainted them with their own wishes." So far Dom Leander.

Lewis Owen gives substantially the same story, but adds a few picturesque details, which we must not omit. It seems likely that the spy was at Valladolid at this time; it is certain he was there in 1605. At any rate, he knew Father Roberts and all the circumstances of the case pretty intimately; although his violent anti-Jesuit feeling has no doubt led him to lay on the colours rather thickly. He writes,* "when Father *Persons*, and the rest of the English Jesuites had notice thereof" (i.e. of John Roberts' first leaving, which Owen falsely says was without their leave), "knowing full well *Roberts* to be a man of turbulent spirit, and one that was like to crosse them in their affaires here in England, repaired with all speed to the Lord Abbot (*sic*) of that Abbey & with open mouthes exclaimed against *Roberts*; saying, that he was a very deboysh'd fellow, a common mouer, and breeder of debate in their Colledge, a notorious drunkard, a prophane blasphemer, and swearer; and withall one whom they suspected to be no good Catholike; but rather a spy, or an Intelligencer, sent thither out of England, to discover the estate of the Colledge; and that they had giuen him sundry priuate corrections, for many hainous crimes and offences, not fit to be nominated.

"But in the end when they perceiued that there was no

* *Op. cit.* pp. 85-86.

hope of amendment in him, but rather that hee grew dayly to be worse and worse ; they expelled him out of their Colledge, and gave him a sufficient *Viaticum* to bring him to his countrey, or some other parts : protesting withall, they did not speake this for any malice that they bore him ; but because the Lord *Abbot* and the rest of those religious monks should not thinke hardly of them, or any other English Catholike, by reason of his lewd behaviour.

“The *Abbot* having heard all that they could say against *Roberts*, & beleeving all to be true that they reported. As soone as they were departed, he sent for *Roberts* and privately related unto him all the whole discourse, and told him plainley, that hee could not entertain him any longer in the *Abbey*. Whereupon *Roberts*, being driven to such a *non-plus*, knew not what to say ; yet in the end he began to Apologize for himselfe [*i.e.* defend himself], and said that he was a gentleman very well descended, and one that might have liued very well in his countrey, in good fashion and credit among his friends and neighbours : but his zeale to God’s glory and the good of the Catholike Church had moved him to forsake his native soyle, . . . and not any particular profit of his own ; and therefore he besought his Lordship to conceive a charitable opinion of him until such time as hee should purge and cleere himself of those false accusations laid to his charge by his unkind countrymen, the English Jesuites protesting withall that he was not such a man as they reported him to be : neither had he ever received any correction, priuate or public, in the English College or elsewhere, for any offence whatsoever, or was ever expelled out of the same. And that he was certainly perswaded in his conscience, that Father *Persons* and the rest of the English Jesuites, would receive him againe into their Colledge if hee would goe back thither, notwithstanding all their former exclamation against him.

"The Abbot replied that he would never believe that Father Persons* would admit him again into the Colledge, 'for' said he, 'it stands not with his reputation to entertain such a lewd fellow as hee reports you to be. And if he will, then you shall stay there some few dayes, and then come hither again to me, and I will entertain you and as many students as will come away with you.' . . . The Lord Abbot, understanding by some of his young monks that frequented the Universitie schooles, that Master Roberts was received again into the English Colledge, and was in as great favour and grace with the Jesuits as formerly he had been, was very glad, . . . and hee sent him word in writing, by one of his monks that was very intimate with Roberts, that if hee would come to the Abbey he should be entertained, and as many English students as would come with him. Master Roberts receiving this message from the Abbot runnes away once againe (with two or three other students) from the English Colledge unto the Abbot, where they were courteously entertained, and within a few days received into the Order and habit of St Bennet."

Such is the story of how John Roberts became a monk. But as we have seen, he did not come alone. The names of his companions are furnished us by the Valladolid records. They seem to have been Robert Knaresborough, John Hutton, William Johnson,† and John Jones himself. They all persevered in their vocation, but Knaresborough died in Spain before his Ordination.‡

* Father Persons was not in Spain, and had nothing to do with the matter. But Owen puts him in as the particular *bête noire* of the Protestants.

† See Appendix C. Johnson left the Colledge in May, according to the Valladolid books, a little after Bradshaw, but he may have joined his companions at San Benito before they were sent to Santiago. It is annoying that the Colledge books do not tell us in what month Roberts left for the second time.

‡ Gillow, "Dictionary," iv. p. 60.

Before we follow them further we must pause for a moment to consider the story we have just recounted. It is not an edifying one, and it is certainly a painful one to have to tell. But the truth cannot do harm in the long run, as our Holy Father Leo XIII. has lately reminded historians; and it is not desirable to suppress historic facts, because we could wish they were not facts. No one need be reminded that the faults of two or three Religious, placed in a difficult and critical position, reflect no blame on the glorious Society to which they belong. It must also be remembered that, unfortunately, we have not the Jesuits' own side of the story. But we can make great allowances for them as it is. The future of the Seminary seemed threatened by a movement which promised to become general, and the future of Seminaries like that of Valladolid involved the future of Catholicism in England. It seemed, too, to these Fathers that the methods and system of the Society of Jesus were the best adapted, if not the only ones really adapted, for work in the English Mission, and that the intrusion of other Religious would do more harm than good. They made a mistake, and only succeeded in furthering the movement they desired to check, and it must be admitted that in this case, at any rate, they allowed their zeal to carry them beyond what was right. Father Persons was too clear-sighted not to see the mistake they were making, and a letter of his addressed to Father Creswell is still extant, in which he advises him to leave the students quite free as to their vocations, and not to attempt to force them in any way.

"I have found by long experience," he writes, at the time when the dispute ran highest,* "absolutely the best

* September 12, 1604. From Father Christopher Grene's transcripts. "Stoneyhurst Collectanea," p. 458.

way to quiet and hold peaceable our youths is to let them alone, and be sparing in dealing with them, for the more solicitous and watchful we will seem to be towards them (which they call jealousy), the worse they are."

But Father Creswell, though a very able man, was a difficult man to get on with, both for his Superiors and subaltern officers. (His great quarrel with Father Richard Walpole is a proof of this.) Father Persons condemned him strongly about the hindrances he put in the way of the Benedictine vocations. For reasons of human prudence, if for no other reason (and doubtless there were other reasons) he was quite opposed to resisting vocations which had once declared themselves; though he seems to have felt that the number of Benedictine vocations was a proof that something was wrong in the government of the Seminary.

Later on (in 1607), the trouble still continuing, the General of the Jesuits sent the holy and venerable Father Louis de Ponte to visit the Seminary, and amend what was faulty. One is inclined to cry, "*O felix culpa!*" But for the time Father Creswell was not to be calmed. He allowed himself to use violent language, and even doubtful methods, which in calmer moments he must have regretted. Even as late as 1608 we find him writing to Dr Worthington, President of Douai College (who afterwards became a Jesuit, and had for some time bound himself by a vow of obedience to Father Persons), in a way that betrays great irritation:* "I think it is the devil who attempts now, by way of lewd persons under pretence of a Monk's cowl, what he could not before attempt by Appellants' cloaks; for neither are such truly and religiously resolved, for the love of Almighty God,

* Tierney, vol. iv., Appendix, p. 218.

to become good monks, nor do they any whit favour of holy St Benedict's spirit, nor ever are like well to keep his rules. Also another Welshman,* I think, will shortly follow him, whom I took up in Seville, as poor and bare as a snake; and now he begins to play Esop's snake with us." It is indeed as well that Father Creswell did not take Father Persons' advice, for he cannot but have fomented the Benedictine movement by his unwise opposition. How many other Fathers were actively concerned in this opposition it is difficult to say. Father John Blackfan (who had been one of the first students, and was now Procurator of the College) seems to have been the most prominent. There is no reason whatever to suppose that the great body of the English Jesuits took part in the dispute. On the contrary, many of them maintained the most affectionate relations with our monks. We have already alluded to Father Barkworth's treatment. Though "he had been somewhat molested by the Superiors of the College" on account of his Benedictine proclivities, "which he patiently endured and concealed all his lifetime, speaking well of those by whom he had been ill-used;"† he yet continued on terms of closest friendship with many Jesuits. It was indeed a temporary irritation, confined after all to a few, and it would be as unwise and untrue to exaggerate it as it would be to suppress all mention of it.

For the time certainly feeling ran high. We shall see later on that six students were soon to follow those who had accompanied our hero from the College, and we shall see the strong measures which the authorities took to stop

* It is curious to notice how many Welshmen were among the early first revivers of the Benedictine Order in England. The most prominent men, Fathers John Roberts, Augustine Baker, Leander Jones, were all Welsh.

† Paper in the Westminster Archives, quoted above.

the exodus. Matters were becoming serious, and it was feared that the Seminary would be emptied.

Our young postulants, however, were now removed from this atmosphere of irritation and suspicion. It was decided that they should join their companion at San Martino. There is a little mystery as to the exact date of their entrance into Religion. Johnson, as we have seen, left the College in May; Jones not till October. Father Roberts himself, when examined before the Bishop of London in 1607, said he only stayed about five months at the College. But this would bring us only to March, whereas it is certain that he could not have left till after Bradshaw's departure at the end of April. It is probable, therefore, that his second farewell to the College must be placed somewhere in May, and that Johnson, Hutton, and Knaresborough accompanied him in his flight. They will have stayed at San Benito during the summer months, and only left for Compostella after Jones had joined them in October.

Doubtless they went thither in true pilgrim fashion, on foot, with the staff and wallet, the broad-brimmed hat, adorned with St James' cockle-shell, and the water-gourd slung on the staff. It was a costume universally respected in those days, and one could travel in it unmolested through the wildest country.

Their hearts were filled with joy and enthusiasm. Their desires had been at last fully granted, they were on pilgrimage to one of the most famous shrines in Christendom, and they were going to make their noviciate under the protection of Santiago, the great Apostle and protector of Catholic Spain.

It is over two hundred miles, as the crow flies, from Valladolid to Compostella, and in the wild districts of Galicia and Leon, travelling could be by no means as the

crow flies. Any one who has visited Northern Spain during the autumn months will recall with delight the lovely scenery of that mountainous country, the green hills carpeted with cyclamens and crocuses, the wooded slopes rising sheer from the sides of the narrow mountain pass, while in the distance the snow-capped, jagged peaks of the Sierras shut in the enchanting view.

No country more poetical, more exquisitely beautiful, can be imagined, and no contrast more great with the wind-swept plains, torrid and barren, of old Castille.

To our pilgrims the ever-growing beauties of nature must have seemed a symbol of the changes that Divine Grace was working in their hearts and lives, leading them out of the barren plains of the world, up towards the lofty mountain heights of Christian perfection—" *Levavi oculos meos in montes, unde veniet auxilium meum.*" *

And so at last one day they mounted a hill, and came in sight of the dark granite towers of the holy city to which their steps were bound. Down on their knees they fell, as did all pilgrims to Santiago's shrine, and raised their voices in glad thanksgiving.

How eagerly must they have made their way through the shady arcades of the sombre, granite-hewn city of St James, till they reached the splendid *Portico de la Gloria*, which forms a fitting entrance to the great Basilica. Doubtless, before they knocked at the Abbey gate, they would first pay their devotions at St James' shrine.

And so through the dim solemn nave, with its Romanesque arcades, they hurry till they reach the glorious high altar, where the silver lamps burn ceaselessly, and the great hanging censer ever slowly swings, filling the sanctuary with wreaths of perfumed smoke.

* "I have lifted mine eyes to the hills, from whence my help shall come" (Ps. cxx. 1).

Then above all towers the sacred image of Santiago, with pilgrim's staff and gourd in hand, clad in his famous *esclavina* of solid gold, which they, like all true *Romeros de Santiago*, must devoutly kiss.

There let them kneel awhile before the glittering altar, which enshrines the treasure of Catholic Spain, the sacred body of that disciple who was so specially dear to His Lord, the proto-martyr of the Apostolic College, "James, the brother of John." Surely from him may they learn the lessons of the love of Christ, and drink in here something of that fiery zeal for the honour of His Lord which filled the soul of the great son of Zebedee.

It was close to the granite sarcophagus that held the relics of the glorious Apostles that they were to live their monastic life. Issuing from the northern transept of the Basilica, they would find themselves in the Plaza de San Martino, otherwise known as the *Azabacheria*, on account of the jet rosaries sold here to pilgrims. And before them rose the façade of the great Abbey of St Martin, which was the long-desired goal of their journey.

How impatiently must they have knocked at the Abbey gate, and with what delight must they have found themselves admitted, welcomed, and embraced by their future brethren, and above all by their dear friend and comrade, the novice, Fra Agostino de San Juan!

CHAPTER V.

PAX.

THE Abbey of San Martin "Pinario," or St Martin's of the Pinewood, was founded just outside the walls of Compostella in the year 899. As in the history of all great Monasteries, the beginnings were humble enough, and successive rebuildings have obliterated all traces of the primitive sanctuary. The present magnificent church was only just completed, if so much, at the time that our English postulants entered San Martin. It was commenced under the auspices of Abbot Antonio de Comontes, in 1595, and finished by his immediate successors. Handsome choir stalls for seventy-two monks are arranged at the west end of the church behind the High Altar, for, owing to the inequalities of ground and the difficulties of the site, the principal entrance to the church is at the east end, which is reached by an elaborate flight of steps leading down to the great doorway. The rest of the vast structure is almost entirely of a later date, so that it need not detain us long. The wonderful circular sacristy and the three great courts of the Monastery, with the vast corridor some 290 paces long, occupying the whole of the western façade; the imposing entrance on the south side of the Abbey, reached by a magnificent flight of steps, all this is of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

(1630-1700), and can never have been seen by the English monks.*

In the year 1599 the Abbot of San Martin was Don Diego de Ramos, who had been elected in the previous year. The Abbots were elected in the triennial General Chapter, just as in the Cassinese Congregation, and were not perpetual. The Abbot-General, to whose enlightened and paternal interest the reception and subsequent mission of the English monks is due, was Don Alonzo de Corral, of whom we shall have more to say later on.

The monks (who had been originally attached to the Basilica of Santiago as canons, just as in so many English Cathedrals) were greatly increased in numbers in the fifteenth century, some thirty-two smaller Monasteries being incorporated with San Martin in 1482. From this time, if not before, it was one of the most prominent Benedictine Houses in the kingdom. In Santiago the Abbot took rank immediately after the Archbishop, as the first dignitary of the Cathedral Chapter and Rector of the University. In 1495 the Abbey was united with the Congregation of San Benito de Valladolid, to which it ever since remained attached.

In September 1835 the monks were expelled from its walls, and it was occupied partly by the military, and partly by Government offices till 1868, when the Archbishop transferred his ecclesiastical Seminary to the old Abbey. At least one monk of San Martin still survives, in the person of the venerable prelate, Don Rudesindo de Salvado, founder and abbot *nullius* of the Benedictine colony of New Nursia in Western Australia. He was professed at San Martin on 26th July 1830, at the age

* Some sketches of the monastic pile by Dom Gilbert Dolan, O.S.B., were published in the *Downside Review*, April 1886. We owe some points of this description to his article accompanying the sketches.

of sixteen, and he has still distinct recollections of hearing the older monks speak of the martyred son of the house, who had laid down his life for the Faith in England, two hundred years before. One of John Roberts' arms was preserved as a sacred relic by the Community, but it has unhappily been lost since the expulsion, and all researches have as yet proved fruitless. Don Rudesindo imagines it must have been lost after the expulsion, but it is just possible that one of the monks may have saved it, and that it may some day yet be found.

But we must take up again the thread of our story. Before we proceed, however, to describe the life our English postulants were now about to lead, we must first make acquaintance with them more particularly.

As to our hero, we know him already, and we have seen how the vocation of John Jones, the most noteworthy of his four companions, sprang into life under the gracious and mysterious influence of Divine Providence.

But we are as yet unacquainted with the other three members of the little band.

Robert Knaresborough was the son of a Yorkshire yeoman, Peter Knaresborough of Ferensby, two miles from the well-known town, from which his family derived their name. The good yeoman was a sturdy confessor of the Faith. He had been imprisoned at least three times for his religion, and was well acquainted with the interior of the horrible and fœtid dungeons on Ousebridge at York.

In 1594 we find him tried for his life at the Guildhall of this city, for the heinous offence of harbouring and befriending Seminary priests.

His son Richard, an elder brother, probably, of our Robert, was admitted into the College of Valladolid in 1596, and in due time was ordained Priest, and sent on the English mission. Robert, who was also of course a

student there, and one of the first, as we have seen, to embrace the monastic life, unhappily never lived to work in England, but died after his profession, at San Martin. The other two, however, lived to do considerable service to the Benedictine cause in our country.

John Hutton was also a Yorkshireman, and, like Knaresborough, he and his parents had suffered much for the Faith; indeed his father in all probability died a confessor in chains, in the same prison as that in which Peter Knaresborough was confined, while his mother could lay claim to the martyr's crown. Readers of Father Morris' monumental work, "The Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers," * will not need to be reminded of the heroic constancy of these faithful Catholics of York, William and Mary Hutton.

Mr Hutton, a draper in Christ's parish, after suffering much persecution for refusing to attend the Protestant service, was taken with Mary, his wife, at Mass on the Feast of the Assumption 1579, in the house of Dr Vavasour; and was placed in the Lower Kidcote, a horrible underground dungeon on Ousebridge, which was often flooded by the river. His wife was separated from him in the upper part of the building next to the leads. At first the children were allowed to take messages to and from the prison, but in 1583 it was decided that they should be placed with their mother, to prevent them from going about. Their father was not allowed to see them, and it appears that shortly afterwards their mother was denied access to them.† This brutal order continued in force for the space of a year and thirty weeks, until the Council

* Series III: "The Catholics of York," *passim*.

† The magistrates took great pains to get little John Hutton to bring his parents into peril of their lives, but without success. For instance, they tried to entrap the child into admissions that he had assisted at Mass.

were shamed by the murmuring of the people. John Hutton and the two youngest children were then restored to their mother, who had already suffered five years' imprisonment. The reason they had been separated from her was their part in the disappearance of the heads of some martyrs who had been executed at York, which, in accordance with the barbarous custom of the time, had been fixed on stakes upon the leads of the Ousebridge prison, in which so many faithful Catholics were imprisoned. Mrs Hutton, whose chamber was next to the leads, was charged with having removed these precious relics, and threatened with hanging unless she confessed to the fact. The poor little children (John, the eldest of them, was under nine) were brought before the magistrates, who had with them the four beadles, armed with great birch rods, to terrify the little ones into an acknowledgment of any questions put to them. In this way John Hutton was forced to confess that his mother had made him take the heads off the stakes, with the assistance of two girls, named Margaret Lewtie and Alice Bowman.

The Lord Mayor then took the poor boy home with him and kept him for about three months. During this time ceaseless efforts were made to pervert the child, and make him an instrument for revealing Catholic affairs. His father was also visited in prison, and was requested under

"One of them said, 'Yes, my boy, let me hear as thou canst say *Confiteor*.' 'I cannot say it,' said he. 'Then thou liest,' said he. 'Hast thou not seen the priest have on a silk gown, wrought with gold, and holding a little round white cake over his head, and a silver cup?' 'No,' said the boy, and burst out and wept . . . And one time they brought in a box with [altar] breads that they had gotten in some search, and the Lord Mayor called the boy to see them, and said: 'Lo, Jack, thou knowest what these are well; what dost thou call them?' and gave him one in his hand. 'I know not what they are,' said the boy, 'it is like paper.'" And thus they would have made the poor boy their instrument to know things."—Morris, *op cit.*, pp. 303-4.

threats to confess that his wife had removed the heads, which he declined to do.*

Two new Sheriffs being elected in Michaelmas 1587, inaugurated their term of office by cruelly thrusting into the underground hole, called the "low place" of the prison, amongst the felons, all the ladies imprisoned for religion. The place was already infected by a prisoner who died there, so that this was tantamount to a sentence of death. Mary Hutton took the contagion and died in that horrible place on 25th October. Her two companions, Mrs Vavasour and Mrs Oldcorne, died on the days following, and the three martyrs were buried together on Toft-Green, a common near Micklegate-Bar, their ferocious persecutors refusing them even Christian burial.

The poor husband was still in prison in 1598, and the next year (twenty years after his imprisonment, and the year that his son came to Compostella) his name appears in a list of those who, being without lands or substance wherewith to satisfy the penalties for recusancy, were to be shipped off and banished for ever from their country's shores. Whether this was actually carried out, or whether death released him from his long and cruel imprisonment, does not appear.

His son John managed to escape abroad, and was admitted into the English College at Valladolid, October 30, 1598; the next year found him at Santiago, as we have seen.

His friendship with the other Yorkshire lad, Robert Knaresborough, very likely began in prison.

The fifth member of the group, William Johnson (*alias* Chambers, which was probably his real name), seems to

* The heads were probably those of B. William Hart, martyred at York, March 15, 1582-83, and B. Richard Thirkeld, who suffered May 29, 1583, also at York. They seem to be now lost.

have been of the diocese of Chester, and to have been educated at Douai (where he received the tonsure), previous to passing to Valladolid in September 1590.* We know no more than this of his previous history.

Such were the five young Englishmen, who knocked at the gate of San Martin that autumn day in 1599.

How warmly welcomed they were by him who had already passed some months of his noviciate here, can be better imagined than described. His prayers had drawn them thither; doubtless, they had accompanied them, guarded them, strengthened them all through those trying times at Valladolid, where all seemed against them, and their vocation had to bear such rude assaults; he had suffered and sympathised with them intensely, and now at last they were safe in the harbour, and his joy was full. With what bursting hearts must they have joined in the *Te Deum* at Matins that midnight!

We must now see what sort of life they were called on to lead. Fortunately the Constitutions of the Congregation exist, and are exceedingly full and minute.†

The postulants had first to undergo a formal examination as to their intentions, and the motives which led them to seek the religious habit, as well as to their families, health, character, etc. But these preliminary examinations, then as now required by Canon Law, will no doubt have been made at Valladolid.

Once received as novices, their life was a very severe

* Dr Gillow in his "Dictionary" confounds him with another William Johnson, who was born in 1583, and ordained Priest at Douai in 1617. This one was of the diocese of Carlisle.—Gillow, "Dict.," iii. 640.

† They are written in Spanish. The only edition we have been able to consult is one somewhat later than 1599. But the changes made at this time seem only to have affected the Government, and not the discipline of the Congregation. At any rate, it gives an idea accurate enough; if anything, the discipline was somewhat mitigated in the later edition of the Constitutions.

one. They were entirely separated from the rest of the Community; and the most severe penalties were inflicted on those novices who should speak to one of the professed who had been in religion for less than twelve years. The professed monk himself was imprisoned in his cell for a whole fortnight, and had yet to follow all the conventual exercises by day and night. A second offence involved a still severer punishment; the term of imprisonment was doubled, and both professed religious and novice had to make public prostrations at the entrance of the Choir and the Refectory, according to the rule of our Holy Father St Benedict. A third offence involved dismissal for the novice, and two months' imprisonment for the professed.

It will be thus seen that the seclusion of the novices was entire. They lived in a separate part of the monastery, cut off from the rest by a locked door, of which the novice Master kept the key. They had their own Chapel and their own Refectory in this noviciate, and only joined the Community at the Choir offices. Never were they allowed to leave the enclosure of the noviciate except in the company of another; and their recreations were presided over by their Master.*

The day was divided between manual work, prayer, and study of ascetic theology and of the Holy Rule, and monastic ceremonies and constitutions. The office was very long and very elaborate. Matins was recited at midnight. After this long office, the monks retired again to rest, till Prime, which was sung at six o'clock. It was always sung, and after the office in Chapter, there followed a votive Mass of our Blessed Lady, which was ordered to

* It is possible, therefore, that John Roberts never met the Irish Jesuit lay-brother Dominic Collins, who was also to win the martyr's crown, and who was then a novice in the Jesuit College at Compostella. He entered there December 8, 1598, and was professed February 4, 1601.

be *sung* every day except Monday, when a Requiem Mass was substituted. This Lady Mass (as our Fathers called it) was in Spain, as in England, a much cherished institution. The Spanish Constitutions command the Abbot to see to its daily observance, under pain of suspension.

At Montserrat a chosen band of choristers, called the Pages of our Lady, were, and still are, maintained and educated, in order to accompany this Mass with their clear young voices, and with the added solemnity of musical instruments. They wear a quaint costume, and are specially trained in musical science, so as to perform their duties with the greatest possible devotion and splendour. In other Monasteries the novices seem to have performed this beautiful devotion to the Queen of Saints. The Mass was always celebrated for the Congregation, for the King, for Benefactors, and for the Holy Souls. It was never to be omitted on any consideration.

At half-past nine Tierce was sung, followed by the Conventual Mass, which was a solemn Mass with assistants, always sung. Sext followed the Mass, also sung throughout, unless for any reason there were fewer than twelve monks in choir, which can scarcely ever, if at all, have happened at San Martin.

During the Monastic Fast (that is, from 14th September to the beginning of Lent) dinner, the first meal of the day, was at eleven. In Lent, Vespers were sung at this hour, and dinner followed. During the rest of the year Tierce was sung at nine, and dinner was at ten, except on Fridays, when it was at half-past ten, and fast-days, when it was at eleven.

After dinner (at which meat was allowed on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday), silence was observed till noon. During the summer time this space would no

doubt be employed in the *siesta* so necessary in warm climates.

None seems to have been at half-past twelve or one, according to the time of dinner, and after this there was recreation, and every one was allowed to converse. None, it may be remarked, was always sung while four monks were in choir; and Vespers, which were at two or three o'clock, according to the season, were to be sung if six monks were present, otherwise *a capitulo*. The strain on the voices of the good monks must have been tremendous, and there are few congregations which have attempted so much singing as the Spanish. Compline too (at six or seven o'clock, preceded by supper or collation) was always sung.

In addition to these offices, the Little Office of our Lady was recited every day in Choir, when the rules of the Breviary permit, and when not recited publicly each monk was bound to private recitation.

The novices had to learn the Little Office by heart, as well as the Office of the Dead, the Penitential Psalms, and the seventh chapter of the Rule of St Benedict—that longest and most magnificent chapter penned by our holy Patriarch—“*De Humilitate*.”

But besides these heavy Choir duties, mental prayer was not neglected. The Community spent at least an hour a day in meditation; after Lauds they gave a quarter of an hour to this common exercise; after Compline another quarter; and after Prime (whether before or after the Lady Mass does not appear) half an hour.

Every Monday and Friday they met in the Chapter-house for the “Chapter of Faults.” This invariable feature of all monastic discipline, consists in the brethren voluntarily accusing themselves of all breaches of the Rule, Constitutions, or observances of the Monastery.

The Abbot who presides inflicts a penance (generally of certain prayers), according to the gravity of the offence. Only external breaches of the Rule are here confessed, it is in no sense a public confession of sin.

Some spiritual book was read aloud before Compline, as St Benedict orders, and the discipline was taken *conventualiter* (i.e. by all assembled in the Chapter-house) every day in Lent, on the Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays of Advent, and every Friday throughout the year. During this self-inflicted flagellation the *Miserere* and other prayers were recited in common. The novices took the discipline also on the evenings before they went to Holy Communion.*

Cut off as they were from the society of the Community, their separation from the world was of course stricter still. Novices might not receive visits except under strict regulations; from women none were permitted, unless it were from their mother or sister, or (it is added with characteristic Spanish courtesy) from some illustrious lady of rank: and then either the Abbot or the Novice-Master must be present during the interview. But our English novices will not have been troubled with many visitors. From time to time indeed an English pilgrim found his way to the famous shrine of Santiago (and from one of these visits great consequences followed, as we shall see), but such events were becoming rare.

As to the matter of the vow of enclosure (which had been solemnly approved by Innocent VIII. in 1489), it seems to have been strictly regulated. The Abbot could give permission for a monk to leave his monastery for three or four days twice a year; but even the Prelate could not go more than twenty leagues from his Abbey

* At least I suppose this is what is meant by "*Visperas de Comunión*."

without the General's express permission. The Chapter could give permission for an absence of less than two months once a year; for more than that the General must be consulted.

The Monasteries in the big towns (of which Santiago was not one) were the most strictly guarded. No monk, not even the Abbot, might walk on foot through the streets of Madrid or Valladolid,* nor could they even enter those towns without a special permission from the General.

Such was the kind of life which our young students now entered on. It does not differ, of course, in anything but details of hours and ceremonial from that which the Benedictine is still called upon to undertake in any house of strict observance. The essential features of the monastic life are ever the same, the *Opus Dei*, that "Work of God," which St Benedict insists on so strongly, is ever the foremost duty of every true monk: while all other work to which he may be called by holy obedience takes its colour from and owes its vigour and its vitality to the hours spent in psalmody before the throne of God. All external occupations which are consistent with this common prayer and unquestioning obedience are or have been undertaken by monks according to the circumstances of the times and places in which they lived. Agriculture, study, education, preaching, art, science, missions—all these and numberless other occupations have been entrusted to the Benedictine, and to them all he has brought the zeal of a soul that lives and works for God alone, and the unwearied and patient perseverance of one who looks for a reward not in this life but hereafter.

* It would seem then that if Jones met the Abbot of San Martin actually in the streets of Valladolid, he must have been riding on a mule, and not "walking quietly along," as we said. But it was probably outside the town that this memorable meeting took place.

But the time of probation is one in which external works are laid aside, so that the novice may devote his whole energies to the one necessary task, and learn the great lessons which are the basis of all wisdom—to know God, and to know his own soul. Not until he has learnt in the silence of his cell the secrets of prayer and the joys of union with God, will he be fit to devote his life to teaching others the same sublime lessons.

It was thus that one day the Community of San Martin was assembled in the Chapter-house, and our five postulants were led in to humbly beg the favour of the monastic habit. Prostrate on the floor before the Abbot, they replied to his interrogation that they sought "*Misericordiam Dei et vestram confraternitatem*" (the mercy of God, and a place in the fraternity of His chosen ones). And as this prayer is granted by St Benedict to all who with a sincere heart seek God, and forgetting their own people and their fathers' house, eagerly desire to serve Him in humble obedience, ceaseless praise, and daily dying to self, so it was not refused to our English postulants. They were raised up, were clothed in the blessed habit, sprinkled with holy water, and after receiving the embrace of their new father and the brethren, were led away by the Novice-Master to the noviciate quarters. The grating of the noviciate closed behind them, and for a year they disappeared from the eyes of the outside world. Their life in that enclosure has no history, or rather it has a great history, but one known only to God and His angels, for the trials, sufferings and joys of the noviceship are His secrets.

We can, however, easily imagine some of these trials, while one, though perhaps the least, is mentioned by several witnesses. Their health suffered greatly, we are told, from the restraint of the life, the want of physical exercise, and the Spanish diet, so intolerable to English stomachs. But

through all they persevered, leaning wholly upon the Divine assistance, and strong in the assurance of the Divine vocation. Thus as the year of probation drew to its close, it saw them kneeling once more in the Chapter-house, this time to beg for the crowning grace of holy profession.

We have omitted to state the names by which they were now known, for their secular names had been left with their secular clothes at the door of the noviciate. John Roberts was called Fra Juan de Mervinia,* the Latinised form of Merionethshire, the county of his birth being substituted for the family name. His patron saint remained the same, and certainly no monk could wish for a better protector than St John, whether it be the great Precursor (chosen patron of our holy Father St Benedict), or the eagle-souled "disciple whom Jesus loved," John, "the brother of James," that James who reposed in the heart of the great sanctuary of Compostella. His companions doubtless each received a religious name, though we only know those of two of them. John Jones was known from this time by the name which has become so famous, Fra Leandro de San Martin, and Hutton (the third John of the party) became Fra Juan de San Tomás, choosing as his patron the great martyr of Canterbury.

Knaresborough and Chambers are always called by contemporaries by their baptismal names, so we shall continue to know them as Robert and William.

At last the day of profession drew near. Was it the feast of the Immaculate Conception, that feast which ten years later should be the day of the martyrs' condemnation? We do not know, for the "book bound in calf-skin," in

* The Spanish Benedictines at this time seem to have used the title *Fra* instead of the usual Benedictine *Dom* or *Don*. In using the English form of their names we shall, however, adopt the style now almost universal in the Order.

which the Constitutions order the details of every profession to be entered, has been unhappily lost with the greater part of the archives of San Martin. At any rate it was towards the close of the year 1600 that our five novices (for Dom Augustine seems to have waited to be professed with his friends) were admitted to the solemn vows of religion.

Before the great day approached, they had to prove, in a strict examination, their proficiency in the ceremonies, exercises, and usages of the monastic life, as well as their thorough acquaintance with the Holy Rule and Constitutions. If the Abbot and his *Consejo* were satisfied, the admission of the novice was then referred to the whole Community. If the election was favourable, the novice made his will and disposed of his property (for after these solemn vows he would be in the eyes of the law as a dead man), and he wrote out the formula of his vows, which was to be solemnly read in the ceremony of profession.

On the day of profession our novices, who had disposed themselves for the solemn act by a general confession, came with their Master before the Community assembled in Chapter.* They knelt humbly down, and asked in the accustomed formula for the grace of being admitted to holy profession. This having been granted by the Abbot in the name of the Community, they were given the kiss of peace by the whole Chapter. Having begged the pardon of the Fathers for the faults they had committed during the year of probation, they again retired to the noviciate, where they heard Mass, and communicated.

The profession itself took place at the High Mass, which was celebrated pontifically by the Abbot. In front of the High Altar was stretched a large carpet, with four

* The details of the ceremony of profession are taken from the "*Ceremoniale* of the Congregation of Valladolid," cap. v. pars 2a, p. 675 etc.

candelabra containing lighted tapers at the corners. At the Offertory the young Englishmen placed themselves before the altar, and each read in his turn the sacred formula of profession.*

After reading this formula, which bound them for ever to God, each took his paper to the altar, and there signed it on the very stone of sacrifice, thus sealing the irrevocable offering. His brethren witnessed the signature, which was also testified to by a public notary, who had to draw up a *proces-verbal* of the whole transaction.

Then standing side by side, with their arms raised towards Heaven, the new monks chanted together the threefold *Suscipe* which has been an invariable feature of all monastic professions since the days of St Benedict himself. Then they lay prostrate on the carpet while psalms and litanies were sung over them.†

After many prayers the habit of the professed monk was blessed and put on them by the Abbot, with solemn words of exhortation, and the Vestiarius, or *Ropero*, sewed the hood which covered their heads, so that they could not take it off. They had thus to remain covered for

* That of Fra Juan ran as follows:—"Ego frater Joannes de Mervinia promitto stabilitatem meam perpetuæ inclusionis, et conversionem morum meorum et obedientiam coram Deo et sanctis ejus, secundum regulam sanctissimi Patris nostri Benedicti, in hoc Monasterio Sancti Martini Ordinis ejusdem sancti, in præsentia Reverendi admodum Patris Fratris Didaci de Ramos ejusdem Monasterii Abbatis, et sub obedientia Reverendissimi Patris Magistri Fratris Alphonsi de Corral totius Congregationis Generalis.

(1, Brother John of Merioneth promise my stability of perpetual enclosure, and conversion of my manners and obedience before God and His saints, according to the rule of our most holy Father St Benedict, in this Monastery of St Martin, of the Order of the aforesaid Saint, in presence of the Very Reverend Father, Fra Diego de Ramos Abbot of the aforesaid Monastery, and under the obedience of the Right Reverend Father, Master Fra Alonzo de Corral, General of the whole Congregation).

† Psalms xlvii. (*Magnus Dominus et laudabilis nimis*), l. (*Miserere mei Deus*), and cxxxiii. (*Ecce nunc benedicite Dominum*). In the Litanies were inserted the names of SS. Placid, Boniface, Vincent Abbot, and Ramirus, Martyrs; of SS. Leander and Ildephonsus, Pontiffs; of St Benedict, St

three days, during which time they remained in strict silence and retreat, nor were they even allowed to recite in Choir, so as to be heard by those next to them. The ceremony of profession ended with the blessing of the Abbot, and two monks, vested in copes, led the newly professed to the stalls which they were henceforth to occupy. On the third day from the profession, the hood was unsewn during the Conventual Mass, at the moment of the *Pax*, by the senior monk in choir. The new monks then admitted to the full privileges of the solemn professed, went to Holy Communion at the Mass, and from henceforth became full members of the Congregation.

It is a pious tradition that the prayers of the young monk during the solemn ceremony of profession have a special efficacy, and that what he asks at that most sacred moment of his life, God will not refuse him. (The same belief is common in Spain, as to a priest's first Mass). It is not difficult, I think, to guess what was the nature of that petition which welled up from the overflowing heart of our young English monk, as he lay there on the pavement of St Martin. Did he not offer himself, his life, his blood, for the conversion of England? *Suscipe me Domine*, he had just been singing, *Suscipe me, secundum eloquium tuum et vivam, et non confundas me ab expectatione mea!** And surely God, Who is faithful, did not disappoint him of his hope.

Maurus and St Bernard; and the holy virgins Scholastica, Florentina, and Gertrude. Also petitions for the newly professed, e.g. *Ut pacem eis dones; ut oculos misericordiæ tuæ super eos reducere digneris; ut obsequium servitutis suæ rationabile facias; ut regularibus disciplinis eos instruere digneris; ut quod te inspirante promittunt, te adjuvante perficiant.* See the "Processionarium Monasticum," p. 244. Matriti, A.D. 1736.

* "Receive me, O Lord, according to Thy Word, and I shall live, and do not disappoint me of my hope" (Ps. cxviii. 116).

CHAPTER VI.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

IN the spring or early summer of 1601 there came great news from England to the little band of newly professed monks at San Martin.

An English priest named Cuthbert, says Antonio Yepes, came at this time from England, with four young ladies in his charge, whom he was conducting to the famous Convent of the Bridgettines of Sion, at this time settled in Lisbon. Devotion to the great Apostle led the little party to direct their steps first to Galicia, and so it was they came to Santiago, where they duly called at San Martin, to pay their respects to the Abbot, General Don Alonso de Corral, then in residence there.

How well we can picture the scene—the large, low monastic parlour, with its floor of shining cool red tiles, its wooden rafters inlaid with quaint arabesques, its panelled walls and dim light, so refreshing after the glare of the streets outside; the two Abbots (for, doubtless, the Abbot of San Martin would be present too), in their black cowls, with wide sweeping sleeves, their hoods falling in long folds in front, half hiding the golden gleam of the chain and pectoral cross which bespoke their rank, re-

ceiving with stately Spanish courtesy their English guests, the old priest with his silver hair, and the four timid girls, who keep a little in the background, but put in a word now and again, to corroborate some statement of their companion. And then the five young monks are sent for, to be introduced to their compatriots, and to hear the news from England, and perhaps to act as interpreters, for we suspect the good priest's Spanish is not of the most fluent. And we fancy as the story goes on, and the future nuns chime in more confidently as their shyness wears off, that we can see the light on our hero's face, and the glow of enthusiasm which fires his eyes, as he listens breathlessly to the news they bring.

There are tears running down from most eyes before it is finished; but in the faces of the young monks there is more joy than sorrow, and when they are alone again, it is a *Te Deum* which they sing. For it is wonderful news, news which makes the heart beat and the pulses throb; and it is news which is fraught with more consequences than they yet can guess.

And what was the story that the old priest told in the parlour of San Martin that fair summer afternoon?

It was briefly this, that Mark Barkworth—Mark, their old friend and companion of Valladolid—had fallen into the hands of the heretics, and had been cruelly martyred in February of that very year.

Not two years had that generous heart beat and suffered for souls in England, before it was torn out of his breast before his very eyes, and lifted up in the face of the sun as the heart of a traitor.

But no traitor was he who gave his blood so joyously, singing as he went to his death, as these ladies could testify, for some of them had seen him. But what had made the greatest impression on the people, was (so the

old priest declared) the fact that he was dragged to the gallows clad in the full habit of a Benedictine monk, with his head tonsured in true monastic fashion.

The concourse was extraordinary, and the jubilation of the Catholics was immense, for all believed that the blood of a son of St Benedict would be the seed of an abundant harvest of souls, and so indeed it proved, for many were reconciled to the Church through assisting at the martyrdom.

And then the old man waxed eloquent, as he descanted on the English love for St Benedict, ever and anon appealing for corroboration to his little company, and declared in burning accents that this devotion was so great that he believed that the re-conversion of England was reserved to the Benedictine Order; for the name of Saint Benedict was the sweetest to Englishmen of all names after those of Jesus and Mary; and even the heretics would listen to a son of Benedict when they would spurn another priest with fury from their doors. How eagerly the young monks listened, how anxiously they glanced now and again to see what impression all this was making on their Abbots, how their eyes glistened and their faces glowed as all the beautiful details of the martyr's death were narrated; the martyr who had been the first * to die in England clothed in the sacred habit of her first apostles!

We shall see that the account of Mark Barkworth's glorious end did indeed make a great impression on the Abbot-General, and was the indirect cause of important resolutions in the near future. But we suspect that he was far too prudent to commit himself to much just then, and he did not let his sons see how deeply he was stirred

* First, that is, of course, of the martyrs of the Elizabethan persecution.

by what he felt might be the intimation of the Divine Will.

But now let us gather together as well as we can, the details of the martyrdom, which was announced so graphically at San Martin. Would that we could tell it in the words of the English priest, but no more details of his conversation have come down to us.

When Father Barkworth and his companion Ven. Thomas Garnet, left Hyrache, they came with great joy to La Rochelle, from which port they sought an opportunity of passing over to England. But they nearly fell into a great danger in this Huguenot town, a danger which had been fatal to several of our priests, who might have been thought safe in a Catholic country. For there were several English merchants in the town, who were fanatic Protestants, and observed with great suspicion the demeanour of their two Catholic countrymen. From their piety and gravity of behaviour they strongly suspected them to be priests, and to suspect them of such a crime was only the first step towards a plot to seize their persons, and send them over as prisoners to England. Thus our missionaries would only have reached their country to find themselves safely lodged in the Tower or Newgate, from which the transit to Tyburn was but a short and easy one. Fortunately, Mark Barkworth was not a man to fall a victim to the plots of his enemies, while shrewdness or courage were of any avail, and he succeeded in escaping from the snare woven for his feet. He escaped indeed with difficulty, but escape he did, and not content with thanking God for his deliverance, he resolved to do his best to prevent the possibility of such dangers in future. So he went boldly to Court, and laid his complaint before the Most Christian King. Henri IV. had only issued the edict of Nantes in the past year, and

no doubt it had served to make the Protestants more insolent than usual; but the brave English priest, in spite of his broken and imperfect French, and his total lack of friends at Court, managed to obtain an interview with the Monarch, and successfully pleaded his cause. He represented to the easy-going King that it was intolerable that while heretics had been granted every liberty and security in his kingdom, Catholics were not safe; and he begged his Majesty that English Catholics might be protected at least as much as were their Protestant fellow-countrymen. The King was characteristically kind, and gave him full satisfaction in the matter. From France he crossed over to England, where his zeal and courage were the admiration of all who knew him. "But," says the writer from whom we glean these details,* "so splendid and brilliant a flame could not long be hidden, and so he was soon taken by the heretics and thrown into Bridewell Prison, a place destined for the correction of persons of infamous life, but that now serves for the holiest priests, and the most chaste Catholic virgins."

This horrible prison, intended for the lowest prostitutes, was indeed at this time crowded with illustrious Catholics, who were made to toil at the hardest labours under the lash of their taskmasters.† It was here that the martyr

* Westminster Archives, ix. 292.

† From a letter in the "State Papers" (Domestic Addenda, Elizabeth), vol. cclxix., 32, 1598, (?) it appears that Fr. Barkworth had first been sent to Newgate. The letter is as follows:—

"To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Cecyll, Knight, principall Secretary to Her Most Excellent Majesty.

"The most humble petition of George Barkworth.

"This petitioner hath been prisoner in Newgate these vi. months, as supposed to be a seminary priest, which he protesteth he is not. He hath been examined nine several tymes before my Lord Chief Justice and others: he was brought to the Sessions bar at Newgate 4 tymes. And [wrote] about 3 weeks since to your honour, laying open many distresses

met the Spanish captain Spinola, and related to him the wonderful vision in which St Benedict had decided his vocation and predicted his martyrdom.

He was often rigorously examined, and so fearless and undaunted a front did he present to his persecutors, that

and humbly praying in respect of his health to be removed to Bridewell, as to a place of more open air. Whereupon it pleased your honour in commiseration to direct your letters to Mr Waad and other the high commissioners for his remove there to remain in the same terms and in the same sort as formerly he was in Newgate. But by the practice of one Parrat the warrant was altered, and the petitioner detained in Newgate some ten days longer, the said Parrat coming unto him every day and practising for gain, or otherwise threatening his further trouble. This suppliant gave him XL. shillings and was then presently removed, the warrant naming him to be a seminary priest, which he refuseth to accept of, rather chosing to remain in Newgate than to receive a Remove by such a name: but he was taken away against his will and brought to Bridewell, where he had the liberty of the prison for two days. In all which time the said Parrat sollycited him for more money, affirming that by his means he was removed, and unless he would give him viii. l. more he would cause him to be shut up close prisoner, which the petitioner in respect of his poor estate refused to do. And was instantly closed up in the lowest room of the house, where he remaineth comfortless, unless by your Lordship he may be relieved, protesting that he is not the man he is supposed for of being a priest. Therefore he humbly prayeth your honour in your honble commiseration to grant your warrant to the keeper of Bridewell that he may have the liberty of the house as he had at Newgate. And that he may rest at your honour's pleasure only to be disposed of at any time as your honour shall think fit; so shall he hold himself bound in all duty to pray for your honour's happy and honourable estate.—Your honour's most bounden,

“GEORGE BARKWORTH.”

There is little doubt that this writer is to be identified with the martyr. We know that he was in Bridewell at the probable date of the letter, and the name is an uncommon one. But the most convincing proof is that we find in the accounts of Fr. Barkworth's trial, that a certain Parrat was on the jury, and that the martyr objected and challenged him because (as he said) he knew he would swear that he was a priest. This Parrat was evidently a pursuivant, one of these ruffians who lived on the persecuted Catholics. His being included in the jury which was to try his victim is a striking example of Elizabethan ideas of justice.

The only objection to the identification is the Christian name of the writer, for by denying his priesthood, he merely means that he has not been legally proved to be a priest. But it is not clear whether Mark was his baptismal name or a religious one. Fr. Henry More calls him “Pater a Sco Marco Barkworth,” and in any case names were frequently changed in those days.

We may note that George was the name of the Flemish Jesuit who

our author fitly compares him to the great martyr St Lawrence. Indeed, there was something in his character, in the "holy rudeness" with which he rebuked his judges, in the frank gaiety with which he met the brutal browbeating of the examiners, and, above all, in the overflowing joy with which he suffered his cruel agony, that remind one irresistibly of one of those early Christian martyrs, who faced so unflinchingly the Roman procurators, laughing to scorn their threats and their tortures.

We are told that he let slip many opportunities of escaping from his dungeon. The crown of martyrdom was what he coveted, and the day of his death would be the day of his espousals to Christ in the Order he loved.

At his trial at the Old Bailey, he was told to hold up his hand, which was the usual sign of pleading.

"For what crime?" said he.

"For the crime of priesthood and treason," said the Lord Chief Justice.

"Why," he replied, "can any one maintain that to be a priest is treason? Was not our Saviour a priest according to the Order of Melchizedech? and will any one say that He was a traitor? Though I am of opinion were He to be judged at this tribunal, He would meet with the like treatment as I look for."

They reiterated their demand. "Barkworth, hold up thy hand; by whom wilt thou be tried?"

"By God," saith he, "and by the Apostles and Evangelists and all the blessed Martyrs and Saints in Heaven."

received him into the Church. There is nothing more likely than that he may then have assumed this name in gratitude to his benefactor. Father Barkworth's *alias* was Lambert. The letter is very small, written closely in a cramped handwriting, as if it were an object to the writer to save paper. It is the only relic of the martyr remaining, except a small bone at Taunton.

"Not so," said the judge; "you must say, 'By God and my country.'"

"What," pointing to the jury, "you mean these poor men, my lord? I will never let their blood lie at my door, for you will oblige them to bring in their verdict against me, right or wrong, or lay so heavy a fine on them in the Star-Chamber, they will scarce be able to pay it in their whole lives."

The judge then put the question to him, "Art thou a priest, yea or no?" and the following dialogue ensued:—

"I will neither say that I am a priest, nor that I am not."

"Well, then, I see thou art a priest."

"If you can prove that, I am a dead man; your laws stand against me, and I expect no favour of your hands: neither do I fear death, trusting in the grace of God. Nay, if I had ten lives I would willingly lay down them all for Him Who suffered so many torments and so cruel death for my sins."

"Tell me then, if thou wilt not confess thyself to be a priest, what art thou?"

"A Catholic" (making the sign of the Cross), "and were I worthy to be a priest, I should look upon myself placed in a dignity not inferior to that of angels; for priests have entrusted to them the power of remitting and retaining sins in God's name, which was never given to angels."

At this the company burst out into a noisy fit of laughter, but surely the walls of Old Bailey never listened to a more noble and beautiful confession!

Again they pressed him as to whom he would be tried by, and he replied, "By God and His Apostles, and not by these unlearned men. I was brought up to learning from a boy, and after taking my degrees among the learned" (and here the memory of the old Oxford days

filled him with a legitimate pride), "I spent in study full seven years more; let learned men judge in my cause, and not such as are unlearned."

"Will you then be tried," they said, "by a jury of ministers?"

"*Apaga istos diabolicos canes!*" he replied. "Hell fire will try them; my cause is not to be trusted to such as them."

"You would then be tried by priests?"

"Just so."

"Call in then a jury of them!" (with a sneer).

"Your lordship knows that a complete jury of them may be found in Wisbech Castle."

With this the Lord Chief Justice withdrew, and the recorder, without any more ceremony, neither taking the deposition of witnesses, nor having the confession of the accused, nor waiting for the verdict of the jury, pronounced sentence upon the prisoner as in cases of high treason.

When the martyr heard the horrible details of his sentence, he fell on his knees, and with a joyful and smiling countenance, raised his eyes to Heaven, made the sign of the Cross, and cried, "Thanks be to God!"

He then thanked the judge for the great favour he had shown him, and turning to the crowd exhorted them to live lives worthy of Christian men, and not to fear what the world could do against them, for "to die for justice and truth is a Christian's greatest gain, and he can desire no greater happiness than to shed his blood for Him, who poured out His own so lavishly for us."

It was just at the time of the trial of the queen's old favourite, the Earl of Essex, for rebellion and treason against his mistress, and the firm and soldierly bearing of the resolute martyr as he was led back through the

streets to his prison attracted the attention of the crowd. They asked his conductors if he were not one of the ringleaders of the Earl of Essex's riot. The servant of God replied himself; "No, but I am a soldier of the great Captain Christ, who am about to die for my faith."

In prison some scruples suggested themselves to his mind. Had he not perhaps failed in charity towards his judges and the Protestant ministers? Should a disciple of Christ have spoken so strongly against his persecutors? These questions are alluded to in a letter which he wrote from his dungeon to a friend.* "Do not, I pray you," he wrote, "be scandalised that I was so sharp against God's enemies in this my conflict. Twenty and two years was I nurtured with this pestiferous and deadly food, and the more attentively I consider it, the more vehemently do I hate and detest the foulness of the new doctrines, and this negation of faith. Eight years have I passed in the school of Christ, my first instructor being that prudent and revered man, Dr Barrett,† who for two years was my master in the Faith. There were also those noble confessors, Dr Arrowsmith of Lancashire, and Bradshaw, men of upright and renowned life, now helping me in heaven by their prayers, as I am firmly persuaded." He then goes on to speak of his fellow-martyr, Father Filcock, S.J., who was an old fellow-student of Valladolid, and who had ever been one of his dearest friends, when they were free and now still more in prison; "a man of extraordinary humility and exquisite patience, piety, and charity, whose example is worthy to be taken as a rule of holy living. And my heart assures me that we shall die

* Quoted by Father More, "*Hist. prov. Angl. S.J.*," anno 1601.

† Second President of the English College at Douai. He brought it back from Rheims to Douai.

together, who have lived together for so long a time."

Father Henry Garnet in a letter to the General of the Society (Vitelleschi), dated March 11, 1601, gives us some more particulars of the martyrs.[†] He says that Father Barkworth had been in England a year and a half (so that he must have come there about August 1599),[‡] "and had already effected great good in London, conducting himself well towards the Archpriest, and showing great benevolence and gratitude towards myself on account of a little assistance I had given him. He was . . . brought to the tribunal on the Vigil of St Matthias (February 23), exhibiting great constancy and fortitude, to the admiration of all. He refused to be put upon trial by the jury, giving as a reason that he knew that upon the jury there were certain persons named Parratt, Ingleby, and Singleton§ ready to swear he was a Priest, and he wished to throw all responsibility of his death upon the judge; but the judge, unwilling to take upon himself such a burden, delayed to give sentence till the afternoon.|| When it was passed, this holy priest was consigned to the *limbo*, where he remained very cheerful until death."

This was in Newgate, the prison of condemned, and is

* Lest the reader, too, should be scandalised by the martyr's strong language about the ministers, it must be recalled to mind that the fanatical Calvinistic preachers of that day, with their hatred for all that was Catholic, were quite different beings from the amiable, tolerant, and often Catholicly-inclined Anglican clergyman of the present day; as different as Queen Elizabeth from Queen Victoria.

† Foley, "Collectanea," ii. p. 1361.

‡ He left Valladolid in July, as we learn from the College books.

§ Ingleby and Singleton are well-known Catholic names. No doubt these men were apostates. Parrat is the blackmailer mentioned in his letter from Newgate.

|| When he would no longer be present. As we saw, the recorder gave sentence.

thus described by Father Garnet: "It is a place underground full of horrors, without light, and swarming with vermin and similar reptiles; it is impossible to see there without candles continually burning, and there is neither bed nor chair, unless the persons provide for themselves. One of our holy martyrs, a priest (Father Southwell), was there some years ago, after being sentenced to death, and whilst sleeping some poisonous insect entered his body causing intense suffering, until he was transferred to the repose of the Saints and just ones of God. . . .

"The day of their happy triumph had now come, the first Tuesday in Lent, and these two Fathers (*i.e.* Ven. Mark Barkworth and Ven. Roger Filcock) received notice to come forth. Father Mark had shorn his head after the manner of a monk, with a crown; . . . and for a mark of affection he sent a portion of his hair and of his habit to the Archpriest, and another portion of them to myself.* . . .

"The day was intensely cold and it was snowing heavily," but nothing could chill the fire of enthusiasm that flamed in the breast of the martyrs. This day had been chosen (says the writer of the Westminster document) because it was the day on which the Earl of Essex was to pay the penalty of his crimes. As the people were devoted to him, a riot was feared, so in order to somewhat divert the attention from his execution, the authorities "planned a hecatomb of priests" to take place on the same day.

If this be so, the date given by Challoner (February 27) must be a mistake, for the Earl suffered on February 25.† But the dates are not at all sure, for Father Garnet

* This affection for the Superior of the Jesuits in England, is a pleasant sign, and goes to corroborate our remarks in Chapter IV.

† Lingard.

says it was the first Tuesday in Lent, and that the first Thursday in Lent was the 26th of February. The Tuesday following on which he says the martyrs suffered would be March 3. The confusion doubtless partly arises from the differences between the old and new style. All we can say for certain is that the martyrdom was on the first Tuesday in Lent, both according to the old and the new styles, as Father Garnet is careful to mention.

With the two heroic priests suffered an equally heroic woman, the Ven. Anne Lyne, who was condemned for harbouring a priest. While holy Mass was being celebrated in her house on Candlemas day by the Ven. Francis Page, S.J., the pursuivants broke in upon the sacred function, and though the priest escaped in the confusion (for this martyr's hour had not yet come), the pious lady of the house was arrested with some of the worshippers, and speedily lodged in Newgate. She had previously been housekeeper to Father John Gerard, who gives us many interesting particulars of her holy life in his autobiography. Though exceedingly weak and delicate in health, she met death with unflinching courage, declaring to the crowd her joy to die for Christ. "I am sentenced to death," she cried, "for harbouring a Catholic priest; and so far I am from repenting for having so done, that I wish with all my soul, that where I have entertained one, I could have entertained a thousand!" As her "crime" was felony and not high treason, she was taken to Tyburn in a cart, and was hanged till life was extinct. When the hurdle arrived on which the priests were stretched, she was already dead, and the holy Benedictine, reverently kissing the edge of her robe and her hand as she hung on the gallows, exclaimed: "Ah, Sister, thou hast got the start of us, but we will follow thee as quickly as we may!"

There is nothing more beautiful in the acts of the martyrs than the triumph of this Benedictine and his holy comrade. We see the great triangular gibbet of Tyburn, standing in the midst of the snow-clad country; the walls and towers of London loom darkly in the background; around the gibbet with its sacred load, press an eager crowd, hardly restrained by the halberds of the sheriff's officers; in the cart beneath the gallows stands the monk, for he is to die first. The Jesuit stands at its side. They are singing for joy! As the hurdle was being jolted over the ill-paved streets, the monk's voice had been heard singing loud above the tumult: "*Hæc est dies quam fecit Dominus, gaudeamus gaudeamus in ea!*"* And now the same triumphal strain bursts out again, and the two martyrs join in the Paschal Antiphon, singing again and again, "*Exultemus et lætemur in ea!*" The ministers who flocked like birds of prey around their victims, tried to interrupt this sublime concert, but to no avail. While the people gaze with breathless attention at the cowed and hooded form of the monk, he interrupts his hymn to speak to them. A minister puts in his word: "Repent of your sins, and remember that Christ has given His life for you!" He replies by holding up the rope which he devoutly kisses, and with hands raised as high as the fetters permitted, cried aloud, "And so I am now giving my life for Him, and I would that I had a thousand lives to lay down for Him. *Majorem charitatem nemo habet.* I am come here to die, being a Catholic, a priest, and a religious man, belonging to the Order of St Benedict" (one thought of gratitude and love flies back doubtless to Hyrache and its gracious monks); "it was by this

* "This is the day which our Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."

same Order that this realm of England was first converted."

He then resumed his singing as before! "*Cantare Amantis est*," says St Augustine, and surely this was a true monk and a true lover who thus sang God's praises in the very jaws of death!

The cart was drawn away while he was singing. He is now suspended struggling in the air. Alas, for the cruelty of depraved hearts! "Some cruel wretch," says Challoner, "fearing lest the weight of his body should put the martyr too soon out of his pain, for he was tall and bulky, set his shoulders under him to bear up at least some part of that weight, so that he was cut down while he was yet alive."

The rope was indeed almost immediately cut; and heavily the martyr fell to the ground. He remained standing on his feet, half dazed by the shock.

The diabolical work commenced now in good earnest. The hangman throws him down, and drags him by the rope to the place where on a block lie ready all his horrible apparatus of butchery.

The sacred form is stripped naked, and the people note with amazement that below the monk's tunic he wears a shirt of hair. The disgusting mutilations are carried out in all the horrible details prescribed by the law.* As the members are cut off and thrown into the fire, the blanched lips part and a cry is heard—"O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!" Then the poor heaving body is ripped open, the bowels pulled out and thrown into the fire, and even at this awful moment, those standing near, heard the martyr in his agony cry aloud to God—"O God, O God, have mercy on

* It seems incredible that such atrocities should have been perpetrated in London two centuries ago. Yet the more infamous details of the sentence—"præcidentur genitalia ante oculos tuos" were not a relic of barbarism, but were actually added to the old penalty for High Treason, in the reign of a woman—Queen Elizabeth.

me ! Jesus ! Jesus !”—Then the heart, still beating, is torn from the breast, and held up on the point of a halberd to the crowd :—“ Behold the heart of a traitor !” is proclaimed.

Ah, true heart ! thy pain is ended now, and thou art resting with unspeakable joy upon the heart of God ! Now has St Benedict come forth from the ranks of the blessed to claim thee as his son, and to welcome thee to the joy of thy Lord ! A traitor thou art called on earth, but thy fidelity to thy King shall be for ever glorious in Heaven !

The mutilated body is laid on the block, the head is cut off and thrown into the caldron which seethes and boils over the fire, in order to prepare it for the exposure on London Bridge.*

The body was then chopped into quarters, according to the sentence, but the sacred limbs were not, for some reason or other, exposed on the gates of the city, but were buried near the gallows. An interesting detail is recorded by an eye-witness. While the body was being quartered a London 'prentice noticed that the knees were, like St James', hardened by constant kneeling, whereupon he picked up one of the legs in his hands, and holding it out towards the Protestant ministers (now engaged in pestering Father Filcock with their importunate questions), cried, “ Which of you Gospellers can show such a knee ?”

The Jesuit who had stood by and encouraged his friend during his frightful agony (which was unusually prolonged by the executioner's unskilful blundering †), calling out to him in Spanish, “ Courage, Father ! more pain, more glory,”

* This head was rescued by the Catholics, and was preserved with veneration at Douai, at St Gregory's Monastery. It was unhappily lost at the French Revolution.

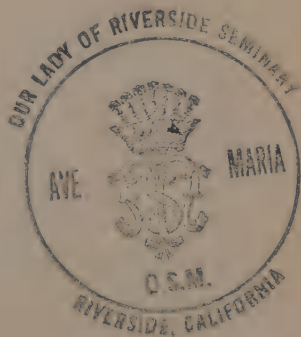
† “ *Insanus, dicam, an imperitus carnifex, qui dum luctatur cum seminece et interiora rimatur,*” etc.—Father More, *op. cit.*

had thus to undergo, as Father Garnet remarks, a double martyrdom. He was a man of delicate constitution, and it is a comfort to hear that he was not treated with quite so much cruelty as his heroic companion ; for the heretics were peculiarly exasperated against the Benedictine.

He made, too, "a glorious end of this miserable life," and soon rejoined his fellow-martyrs, and shares now in their "exceeding weight of glory," which is to endure for all eternity.

The body of Ven. Anne Lyne, and the quarters of the Fathers, were rescued by the Catholics, although they had purposely been buried under the bodies of several malefactors.

Such is the story which was recounted by the English pilgrims in the parlour of San Martin. We can imagine now the enthusiasm that filled the souls of those who listened, as of those who narrated. And in the heart of one at least of the hearers, was kindled the fire of eager longing for martyrdom, the fire which ever burned more fiercely within him, till, with tears and songs of joy, he, too, poured out his blood upon the sacred soil of Tyburn.



CHAPTER VII.

THE ENGLISH MISSION.

THE martyrdom of the Venerable Mark Barkworth was not long in producing abundant fruits. The great effect made on the people who witnessed it, the conversions more numerous than had been known before, and the miracles wrought by his intercession and by his relics, made a profound impression on all who heard of them. The Spanish captain Spinola, who had received the last confidences of the martyr in his dungeon, sought out on his return to Spain the Benedictine General, and told him the wonderful story of the martyr's miraculous vocation.

The finger of God seemed pointing towards England, and the Benedictine Superiors did not hesitate long. In the hearts of their young English monks the sacred fire was burning hotly, and when the General Chapter met in 1601, they are said to have presented a petition, begging to be allowed to go to England to preach the Gospel to their fellow-countrymen. Weldon says this petition was signed by the six English monks of San Martin, and that in it they asserted that they had studied theology for five years, and were well versed in controversy, and append testimonials to this effect. He quotes in the margin as his authority, "An. 1601. Regist. Magn. Congn., p. 146:" * but there must be a mistake somewhere.

* Weldon, "Chronological Notes, MS." (Douai), p. 12. Weldon throughout is nothing if not inaccurate.

Certainly John Roberts had not studied for five years, since he only came to Valladolid towards the end of 1598. We suspect that this petition was really presented in 1602, but even then Weldon must be quoting carelessly from it. He is also making a mistake when he says that the General made application to Rome for permission to send these monks to England in 1603. In January 1603, as we shall see, some of them were already in England. In fact, it is most difficult to ascertain the exact sequence of events at this momentous period for the future of the Benedictine Order in England. The most hopelessly contradictory statements are made by different writers, and Weldon, our principal authority, makes confusion worse confounded by contradicting himself. However, we must try to unravel the skein as best we may.

The Cassinese, as we have seen, had already made an attempt to obtain the Apostolic approval for their plan of sending their English monks to labour in their own country. Though ably seconded by the zealous friendship of Mr Nicholas Fitzherbert, secretary of Cardinal Allen (who at his death left all his property to the Procurator of the English Cassinese monks, and was buried in the *Badia* at Florence), they did not succeed, partly owing to the opposition of the Jesuits, partly to the prudent fears entertained by the Holy See as to the incompatibility of combining the monastic and missionary life. However, in 1601 some English noblemen made another petition to the same effect, and this time the scheme had the powerful support of Cardinal Frederick Borromeo, the nephew and successor of St Charles, who himself presented the petition to Clement VIII. The Pope, it is said,* gave leave, by word of mouth, for the English

* Weldon, "Notes" (printed edition), p. 45.

professed in the Congregation of Monte Cassino to go into England ; but the execution of this grant was delayed for some time, owing to the dissensions between the Society and some of the Secular clergy, which were then at their height.

Affairs stood thus, when in 1602, after the Spanish General Chapter, the "worthy and most Reverend General of the Spanish Congregation, Alonso de Corral, moved partly by compassion, and partly by the zeal and learning which appeared in most of the English which that Congregation had incorporated, gave order by commission of their General Chapter to Pedro de Arivalo, the Procurator of Rome, to propose their desires by way of supplication to Pope Clement VIII. of happy memory. The Cassinese Congregation, by a holy emulation, joined in the same request." * This was granted by the Pope on March 20, 1602, Vigil of the Feast of our most holy Father St Benedict. Thus, both the Cassinese and Spanish monks had received the desired permission, but still delays took place. Any one who is acquainted with the working of the Roman Congregations will have no difficulty in accounting for these. At last, however, all was satisfactorily arranged, the opposition silenced (at least for the time), and a decree of the Holy Office was issued on December 5, 1602, for both Congregations, permitting them to send their English monks to labour in the Lord's vineyard in their own country. Father Baker in his MS. work on the English Mission tells us that the two Congregations (or rather their Procurators at Rome), had both begun to work for this end, without knowing of each other's intention. Doubtless, however, they soon discovered this, and worked together for the same holy

* Weldon, MS. (Douai), p. 13. He says 1603, but this, as we have remarked, is evidently a slip of the pen.

end. Now their desires were fulfilled, and we shall soon see with what alacrity they threw themselves into the holy and perilous labours which Divine Providence had thus prepared for them. But we must return to San Martin, and see how our hero and his companions are fitting themselves for these labours.

Dom John Roberts and Dom Augustine Bradshaw, with their companions, seem to have been sent to Salamanca to study, soon after their profession. The Congregation had a College for its young monks at the famous University, just as the monks of Canterbury, Durham, and other English Benedictine Houses had at Oxford (St John's College, *e.g.* where John Roberts had been educated, stood as we have seen on the site of and continued the traditions of the old Cistercian College of St Bernard); and most of their young monks studied in this or in the other Universities of Spain. But, in anticipation of the call to the English mission-field, the usual period of studies must have been considerably abbreviated for our hero. He must have been ordained priest at latest in the autumn of 1602. Challoner, indeed, says he was ordained in 1600, but this is of course an error, as he was only professed in this year, and not in 1595, as Challoner thought. We hear nothing as to his ordination to the priesthood, indeed so doubtful were his contemporaries as to the period when he was raised to this dignity, that Father Augustin Baker conjectures that he was a priest already before joining the Order. Others assert positively that this was the case with his friend and constant companion, Dom Augustine, but this is also an error.

The news of the Papal decision, while it filled with joy and thanksgiving the hearts of our English monks, made as it spread a remarkable and unexpected impression. Up till now they had been but six, who in humble faith embraced the

Holy Rule of St Benedict, leaving their future in the hands of God. But now that it became known that in England "a door was opened" to the sons of that great Patriarch, vocations began to spread and spring up on all sides with a startling and blessed rapidity. Now it was that the students of the English College at Valladolid began to flock towards the gates of San Benito, and pray for admission, and that many others hastened from England to join in the great movement.*

Naturally, like all the works of God, this met with opposition. As we have already seen, the authorities of Valladolid were far from favourable to it, and when six more of their students secretly left the College to join the Benedictine ranks, their alarm was thoroughly aroused.† Father Creswell complained to his Catholic Majesty, and the king handed over the investigation of the matter to the President of his Council. This dignitary pronounced in favour of the Benedictines,‡ and said that it was unjust to try to hinder the students from joining that Order. The Fathers, however, not to be beaten, had recourse to the Archbishop of Toledo, but he too gave sentence against them. Father Creswell therefore addressed the students, and told them that in future those who wished to become monks would meet with no hindrance, but that they should give him notice of their intention. Two more, therefore, emboldened by this assurance, confided in him

* "Then the English Students . . . ranne away (like so many sheepe to the water) to bee Monks. Yea many Schollers and Gentlemen ; nay, roaring Boys . . . rid Post from England thither to weare St Bennet's cowle."—"Running Register," p. 88.

† These six left apparently in August, September, and October 1603 (as we gather from the Valladolid registers), and not all together. Four left in August. During this year the College lost ten students: but of these only three (Andrew Shirly, Lewis Cook, and Hugh Helmes) are known to have made profession, though others are doubtless concealed under an *alias*, which has prevented us from identifying them.

‡ Dom Leander Jones is our authority for the whole of this episode ("Archiv. Casin. Miscell. erud." iv.)

their desire to join the Benedictine Order. However, he did all he could to persuade them not to, or at any rate to defer their design (says Dom Leander), but the only effect of this was to cause four more, who were actuated by the same ardent desire, to run away secretly, and beg the Prior of San Benito to receive them, who did so with great kindness and pity.

Father Creswell thereupon went to the Apostolic Nuncio, and indignantly complained of the Prior's conduct, in receiving runaway students, who, under pretence of religion, had dragged the Seminarist's cassock through the streets, and likely enough into worse places. The Nuncio, moved by this representation, took strong measures, and though it was a rigorous winter's night, commanded the Prior of Valladolid or his Procurator to appear at once before him, and to bring with him the English students. So when they had arrived, he commanded the students to tell him truthfully why they had gone to the Monastery without the leave of the Superiors of the Seminary. They replied, because Father Creswell had broken his word by preventing other students from going, when he had promised he would rather help them. The Father, being unable to deny this, begged the Nuncio at least to command the students to return to the Seminary for a few days, while they made the spiritual exercises, so that their vocation could be properly tested. But this the students flatly refused to do; and so the Nuncio most kindly offered to keep them in his own house while they made their retreat.

The Rector of the Seminary,* who accompanied Father Creswell, here made some imprudent remarks about the Pope's policy in sending the Benedictines to England,

* P. Alonso Rodriguez de Soro.

which greatly excited the Nuncio's wrath. In dismissing the Fathers, he strictly commanded Father Creswell to send the very next morning to the Monastery any students who wished to go, clad as they were in the Seminarist's habit. And blessing most affectionately the four students before him, he bade them follow the vocation which God had given them, and persevere, if it pleased them, in their pious and holy desire to become Benedictines.

Next day the other two students were duly sent to San Benito; but a rumour seems to have been spread to their discredit, and it was affirmed that none of the new postulants would be allowed to set foot in England for at least twenty years.

The Nuncio was Cardinal Pymasio, and Dom Leander says that he will testify to the truth of his narration, as will any of the religious concerned.

We have given the story as Dom Leander tells it, but we cannot conceal our impression that there must have been a good deal to say on the other side. It was manifestly against all discipline, and very injurious to the Seminary, to permit young men (some of whom were possibly moved by a mere passing attraction, or by dissatisfaction with their surroundings or Superiors) to run away without leave, on however good a pretext. The Jesuits were truly devoted to the cause of the English Mission, and they saw their good work threatened with ruin, and though it is no doubt true that Father Creswell was not always discreet or conciliatory, yet it does not appear clear that the Benedictine authorities acted with that suavity and discretion which might have been expected. Dom Leander, too, is mistaken in saying that the President of the Spanish Council condemned the Jesuits and supported their opponents. We find in the Westminster Archives a letter which corrects this statement. It is the decision of the Council in the matter,

and is dated from Valladolid, September 18, 1603.* The Council say that six students of the English College having recently left the College to join the Benedictines without the knowledge of their Superiors (having, perhaps, first made secret agreement with the monks), his Majesty has been informed of the inconveniences which result from this, particularly that people will not let their sons leave England, nor others risk their lives to conduct them out, fearing that they may follow the same course, and so the Seminary notably suffers, besides which the English Catholics will suffer much spiritual loss through the discords that are likely to arise. His Majesty has therefore resolved to admonish the Benedictine General not to try to attract the Seminarists to his religion, since the English Catholics from long experience know they may trust the priests from this Seminary, and the divisions which might arise in consequence of such action would do more harm than good.

This, however, was only a temporary check. The controversy was to last some years longer, and only to be ended by Rome, who finally settled the matter with her usual wisdom, and in favour of holy liberty.†

We have said that only a small proportion of those who left the College at this time seem to have persevered. But it must be remembered that the death-rate at this time was very large, and while the *aliases* so generally adopted may conceal several monks from identification, more, no doubt, succumbed to the hardships of the life, joined to the bad effects of a climate and *régime* to which they were unaccustomed. As Owen says in his forcible way: "But see the spite! They died like so many rotten

* VIII. p. 310.

† See the decree of Paul V., through the sacred Congregation of the Inquisition, December 10, 1608. Appendix H.

sheepe, and those that scaped had not their healths,* by reason of the unwholesomeness of the air, and that they did not like so well of the fashion and condition of the Spaniards or of their dyet." †

Nevertheless the numbers flowed in steadily; from the Colleges of Douai and Seville, from England itself came ("like sheep to the water," as Owen puts it) flocks of young men, all eager to enrol themselves under the standard of St Benedict. But we are anticipating events, and must return to the winter of 1602.

The joyful news of the decree of December 5, soon reached the little band at San Martino. Not a moment's delay did their fervour allow; they must be off at once to the mission-field, where they longed to spend and be spent. So it was that we find our hero and his companion, Dom Augustine Bradshaw, setting out on their long journey in the very month in which the decree came out. What though it were mid-winter, and the frozen plains of old Castille must be traversed under cutting blasts of icy winds and blinding storms of snow? The voice of the Vicar of Christ had at last been heard; their daily long-continued prayers had received at last their realisation; now not a moment of delay on their part. The promptness of their departure fills us with astonishment, when we think how long is the distance between Rome and Santiago. For on December 5, the decree was issued, and on December 26, our monks began their journey! Was it deliberate choice, or was it a blessed coincidence, that made the feast of the great proto-martyr St Stephen the day of their departure? However it may be, no day could have been more appropriate for the beginning of a

* In fact, Dom Roberts' health seems to have been permanently injured by his monastic life in Spain.

† P. 88.

journey which was to end with the martyr's conflict and the martyr's crown.

Let us watch them then, our two monks (or were there three, as some indications seem to suggest?) as they tear themselves from the embrace of their brethren, and with tearful eyes but radiant faces issue forth from the gates of the city of St James, and turn their steps towards their own country, the land of their desires, the land of their future conflicts and future glory. Dom Augustine, in virtue of his seniority, has been appointed Superior, and Dom John is happy in being able to practise his dearly-loved virtue of obedience. We know no details of the journey, unusually toilsome and difficult as it must have been, though, from St Theresa's vivid pictures of her travels, we know that even under the most favourable circumstances a journey across Spain was no pleasure-trip. Yepes, in his *Life of the martyr*, whets our curiosity only to disappoint it: "I do not pretend here to recount at length the life of this holy martyr," he says, "for this work must wait till its proper time" (a time, alas! that never came): ". . . and therefore I will not relate in detail where he disembarked, in what part of the island he preached,"* etc.—details that would be most precious to us now. But we have found just one or two facts from a paper in the Public Record Office, which are interesting and valuable in the defect of others.

This paper (to which we shall have occasion to refer more at length hereafter) is the report of a conversation held by the writer (who remains unknown to us) with several priests, including John Roberts. This conversation took place during the time that elapsed between the death

* "*Cronica General*" (Cent. 4^a, ano 839, de San Benito, 399), tom. iv. p. 607.

of Queen Elizabeth (March 24, 1603) and the arrival of her successor at London in the beginning of May. "Roberts," notes the writer, "was then newly come from Spain,"—indeed, if Yepes be right, he can only have just arrived, for he dates his coming as "a little after the death of Elizabeth." Roberts told the spy (for so the paper proves him to have been) that he "paid £3 for his passage into England, and that in the night he was set on shore when the rest of the passengers were asleep, and thus he escaped, although an Englishman came on purpose to follow him." These few lines give one a vivid picture of the dangers that beset a priest's landing in England. The fee was a heavy one, some £15 to £20 of our money, for the peril was great. The missionary was only known to the captain of the boat in which he hired his passage, and had to dissemble his sacred calling from the prying eyes of the spies who infested the seaports of Flanders and France. In this case, one of the spies suspecting our two monks to be priests, followed them on to the boat, in order to deliver them over to the authorities when they landed. They only avoided this peril by the stratagem recounted above.

The ship lay at anchor off some deserted part of the coast, a little boat hastily pushed off from her sides at dead of night, bearing its precious cargo to shore, and in the morning when the spy awoke, exulting already in the thought of his prize, lo! the birds were flown, and the ship was already far from the spot which had witnessed the secret landing. We may be sure that the first act of our monks on reaching the dear and longed-for shores of their country, was to fall on their knees and offer themselves, their lives and their labours, for the sacred cause of England's conversion.

But before we proceed to trace as far as we may the

record of the labours and sufferings which John Roberts was to undergo in his missionary life, we must turn for a moment to consider the state of England and the Catholic religion in England at the moment of their arrival.

It was indeed a momentous crisis. The old Queen had just breathed her last, had just gone to her account before the just Judge Whose prerogatives she had for so long usurped on earth. The reign of terror had ceased, and for the moment there was a breathing-space for the persecuted Church. Elizabeth had died as she had lived, ruthlessly persecuting to the last: her hands were red with the blood of Priests, who (as she allowed Camden to write in his *Annals*) she knew well to be innocent of the charges for which they nominally suffered.

It was the moment for which Catholics had been looking with anxiety and hope for more than forty years. It was the moment for which Persons and Allen on the one side, Paget and Morgan and their adherents on the other, had been eagerly and restlessly preparing many years back. Now it had come, but the fruit of their policy was too unhappily visible in the small body of Catholics, distracted by mutual jealousies and dissensions, and in the mass of the nation profoundly estranged from the faith and feelings of men who seemed to them desirous of subjecting England to a foreign and hostile domination. With the blind hopefulness so characteristic of exiles, who know little or nothing of the changes in the thoughts and sympathies of the nation since they were driven out of it, the English Catholics on the Continent had long confidently expected that at the death of the Queen, England would eagerly welcome a Catholic successor, whether he came from Scotland or from Spain. It was to secure the unanimity of the Catholic body as to the claimant to be selected, that Father Persons is said to have devised the

appointment of an Archpriest instead of a hierarchy of bishops to rule the persecuted Church.

As it turned out, no policy could have been more fatal. The Archpriest was suspected of being a tool of the Jesuits, and the result was the unhappy dissensions already alluded to, besides depriving the suffering Catholics of the Sacrament of Confirmation at a time when they needed it so much. But these mistakes were not the only ones made: none surely who knew England could suppose that she would ever consent to become a vassal of Spain? Yet when all hope of converting the King of Scots was gone, it was towards the Infanta Isabel, daughter of Philip II., that the wire-pullers sought to turn the eyes and hearts of English Catholics. The result was of course a violent reaction in favour of James VI. of Scotland, who, though a Protestant, was the son of the ill-fated Mary Stuart, and had already shown symptoms and held out promises of toleration in the event of his succeeding to the Throne. So it was, that hardly had the miserable and hopeless death-bed scene in Whitehall come to an end, than James was proclaimed King of England, amid the enthusiastic plaudits of the whole nation. Not a discordant note was heard, and Father Garnet, the Provincial of the Jesuits, thought it prudent to burn the two breves of the Pope, which he held in readiness for this moment, in which the Catholics were exhorted to allow no one to succeed to the throne of the daughter of Anne Boleyn who would not at least promise favour and relief to the persecuted Church. But now all hopes were centred on the new king, and already many a cheering rumour was passed about among the Catholics as to his fair words and promises addressed to more than one of their number. So Garnet writes (April 16, 1603): "The king's coming is uncertain; . . . the Catholics have

great cause to hope for great respect [*i.e.* consideration], in that the nobility almost all labour for it, and have good promise thereof from His Majesty." So wrote the Jesuit, while James was making his progress from Edinburgh to London, scattering honours, promises, and fair words right and left to the suitors who flocked around him; little did he dream that in three years' time he would be hanging from a gibbet erected by this same king!

"The evils under which the English Catholics laboured," writes the chief modern authority on this period,* "were of no ordinary description. In the first place, not only was all public celebration of their worship interdicted, but the mere fact of saying Mass was sufficient to bring the priest under the penalties of treason, and those penalties were extended to all who should assist or 'comfort him' as the law expressed it. As there were no Catholics who had not at some time or another been present at a Mass, the power of the Government to send the whole number of them to execution was only limited by the difficulties of obtaining evidence. If they failed in this the Ecclesiastical Courts could always issue an excommunication for simple recusancy, or abstaining from attendance upon the Church by law established, and upon this the Civil Courts were empowered to commit the recusant to prison until he submitted. Of course these harsh measures were only very sparingly employed. But if the penalty did not fall upon all who were threatened, it was kept constantly hanging over their heads, and the Catholics were always liable to arbitrary imprisonments and fines, of which they did not dare to complain, as they were allowed to escape without suffering the full penalty of the law.

* Gardiner, "History of England, 1603-1642," vol. i. p. 96.

"But besides all this, there was a regular system of fines for recusancy, authorised by statute. In the first place, all recusants who had sufficient property were liable to a fine of £20 a month. Of those who were so liable at the death of Elizabeth the number was only sixteen.* Those who could not afford this penalty forfeited, if the Government chose to exact the penalty, two-thirds of their lands until they conformed. This land was leased out by Commissioners appointed by the Crown for the purpose, and the lessee paid a certain rent into the Exchequer.

"There still remained another mode of reaching those who had no lands to lose, as the goods and chattels of any person convicted of recusancy might be taken possession of by the Crown. Hard as this treatment was, it was made worse by the misconduct of the constables and pursuivants, whose business it was to search for the Priests who took refuge in the secret chambers which were always to be found in the mansions of the Catholic gentry. These wretches, under pretence of discovering the concealed fugitives, were in the habit of wantonly destroying the furniture, or of carrying off valuable property. It was useless to complain. . . . Under such an abominable system, it is no wonder that the Catholics were anxious for any change that might improve their condition, and that they were hardly likely to acquiesce in the doctrine that they were only punished for treason, and not for religion. It was natural, therefore, that both the Pope and the English Catholics should look with hopefulness to the new reign. Both the declarations which James had made, and the manner in which he had acted in Scotland, made many of them expect to find a protector in him."

* This shows how terribly impoverished the Catholics had become under these extortionate fines.

The little band of Benedictines made their way by the North of Spain, and in due time arrived at Bordeaux. An Irish priest, staying at Bordeaux, gave information to the Government that "three Benedictine Friars (*sic*) had left for England with plenty of money." It would seem then that either Hutton or Chambers accompanied Roberts and Bradshaw on their perilous journey, though Weldon and Baker only speak of two. They reached Paris in due time, and here they made some stay. Dom Roberts in later years said that "he staid in Paris and St Omers about half a year," but about three months must have been the real limit of their stay.*

At Paris they seem to have fallen in with Dr Cecil again, but alas! he had in the meantime fallen into the lowest depths of infamy, and had become a Government spy. Apparently he even betrayed his old friend, and when Dom Roberts left Paris for St Omer, on his way to England, communicated the fact to another spy, who duly reported it at headquarters.† Business detained our Benedictines, so that they did not actually cross the Channel till after the old Queen's death. We do not know by which route they went; but probably they will have crossed from some part of the coast near St Omer. We learn by a paper in the Record Office that there were three "courses they use in conveying Seminaries: the one is by way of Rotterdam, . . . the other is by the way of St Valerie in France . . . the third by the way of Hamboro'."‡ Weldon

* See Appendix G. Dom Roberts' memory for dates was not very accurate.

† Dom. Addenda Elizabeth, xxxiv. No. 38.—"That Dr Cecil told me that one Roberts, a Jesuit, (*sic*) is gone to England, within these eight or nine daies, a very yonge man, but from Spain: and that Joan. Baptista is ready to go after Easter." We think this must refer to our martyr.

‡ "Ways of Conveying Seminary Priests to England," a report by Adam King. Dom James I., lxi. No. 23.

says that they landed at Dover, and that the two Cassinese monks, Dom Thomas Preston and Dom Anselm Beech, who had been sent from Italy on the same holy mission, landed at the same port within a few hours of their brethren from Spain, though neither party knew of the others coming. But this is certainly a mistake, for the Cassinese landed at Yarmouth, as we know from Dom Anselm's own letter to the General Chapter of 1633.* Nor is it probable that the furtive landing by night, which our hero was forced to resort to, would be safely effected at such a frequented part of the coast, as was the neighbourhood of Dover. However this may be, they must soon have found their way to London. It was at the beginning of April in all probability, as we have already seen, that they reached the Metropolis. Who would have recognised in the gay gallants, in their silken doublets and cloaks, the humble and austere monks of San Martin? Father Baker used to say that once while travelling in Italy he came across some monks and continued his journey in their company. In speaking of his adventures in England, the saintly author of "Sancta Sophia" happened to mention that in England he wore a silk doublet and a sword. His horrified companions at once left him to pursue his way alone, protesting that no monk who did such things could possibly save his soul. Our readers who know the state of affairs in England, will not, we trust, be equally scandalised when they learn from Dom John Roberts' own lips that one of his companions who was staying with the Lady Cromwell, "suredly he was well apparelled with a cloak laid about with gold lace wrought velvet hose, silk stockings, and all things there

* "*Ingressus sum in Angliam appulsus ad portum Yaremutham, ubi totam hyemem permansi,*" etc. (General Chapter Acts, 1633. Second Session, August 2). He must have arrived a month or two before the Spaniards, if we are to take "hyemem" at all literally.

unto belonging !”* A monk, as we shall learn by this history, could still remain a true monk, yes, and make mighty strides in the path of sanctity, even though forced to masquerade in velvet hose and silk stockings. Father Baker tells us † that these first monks from Spain “were known and esteemed to be unlearned, that is as to that which is gotten by natural industry and light . . . for as to the rest these Collections show them *in caput anguli*.” This we can well believe, when we remember how short a time our hero and his friend had had for study. The former was scarcely a year at Valladolid, and after his year’s noviceship had only two short years in which to prepare for the priesthood. But in his case, as in that of Dom Augustine, grace and zeal made up for deficiencies in learning, and when we find our martyr standing before the tribunal of his persecutors, we shall see in him yet another striking realisation of our Lord’s promise that He would give His spirit to His servants in their hour of trial, who should Himself suggest the words they needed to confound their persecutors.

John Roberts is said by Dodd to have been extremely sickly and weak of constitution (the Spanish *régime* had doubtless not tended to strengthen him), but his courage and fervour made him strong to do and suffer more than many a man of robust health. As to his interior man, enemies and friends alike testify to his extraordinary virtue and burning zeal for souls. Lewis Owen says : “He was the first that had his *Mission* from the *Pope* and his owne Spanish *Prelate* to goe for *England*, which made him not a little proud that hee should bee a second *Augustine* Monk, to convert and reconcile his Countrymen to the *Romane Antichrist*. Neither did he neglect his Lord and Master’s

* From the minutes of the conversation alluded to above.

† MS. Work on the English Mission.

businessse, but bestirred himselve night and day in negotiating his affaires.”*

The records of his missionary life which have come down to us are, however, bare and scanty enough, but by piercing together the scattered notices which exist, we can form at least the skeleton of the seven short yet fruitful years which still remained for him on earth.

“Work while ye have the day,” was the Master’s warning, “the night cometh when no man can work,” and it was a warning which seems to have been continually ringing in the ears of the young monk, so manifold were the dangers around him, and so multiplied and unceasing his labours.

His principal associates were, no doubt, as Owen says, to be found among the adherents of the Secular clergy, for there was naturally at this time some coolness between the Jesuits and the men whose work they were so strenuously opposing. In fact, in the first glimpse we get of him in England, we find him in familiar and confidential conversation with some of the best-known Secular priests.

* “Running Register,” p. 89.

CHAPTER VIII.

WORK AND SUFFERING.

THE spy's report, to which we have just alluded, states that John Roberts "newly come from Spain," and other priests met in "Mr Bluet's chamber." Now this must have been a cell in the Clink prison,* where Bluet and Barneby, who also took part in the conversation, were confined.

These priests were well known to belong to the loyalist party, and had, in fact, brought themselves into some suspicion with their brethren, through an interview they had with the Queen in 1601, after which they had been released from prison and permitted to go to Rome to prosecute their appeal against the Archpriest. Barneby had signed the famous address † to the Queen in January 1603, in which thirteen priests (headed by Dr William Bishop, afterwards Bishop of Chalcedon, and first Vicar Apostolic in England) had declared their loyalty, protesting that the Queen had a claim on their allegiance "which no authority, cause, or pretence," not even the Pope's, could set aside.

* The Clink prison was in Southwark, adjoining the palace of the Bishops of Winchester, on the bank-side. It was therefore close to the famous church of St Mary Overie or St Saviour, some day to be the resting-place of part of our martyr's relics. The street in which the prison stood is still called Clink Street (Brayley, "History of Surrey," v. p. 438).

† It is printed in Tierney-Dodd, iii. p. clxxxviii., Appendix xxxvi.

In this document the priests professed their readiness to reveal to the Government any conspiracy against the State which should come to their knowledge, by whatever prelate, priest, or potentate contrived, and to resist the same to the utmost of their power. They would defend their country and sovereign, even under pain of Papal excommunication, and considered both themselves and "the lay Catholics born within her Majesty's dominions bound in conscience not to obey this or any such like censure."

Finally, they guarded themselves against misconstruction by the solemn entreaty: "We most humbly beseech her Majesty that in this our recognising and yielding Cæsar's due unto her, we may also, by her gracious leave, be permitted for avoiding obloquies and calumnies, to make known by like public act, that by yielding her right unto her, we depart from no bond of that Christian duty which we owe unto our supreme spiritual pastor."

Among the signatories were not only he whom Rome chose to be the first Vicar Apostolic in England, but also famous confessors of the Faith, like Mush and Colleton, the historian Champney, and last, but not least, two who were soon to shed their blood in defence of the rights of the Apostolic See, Robert Drury and Roger Cadwallador, also Valladolid students.

It is then with such men as these that we find John Roberts holding a long conversation in April 1603. The conversation turned chiefly on the prospects of Catholics under the new *régime*, and the hope was expressed that Catholics would unite, and press the king to accord toleration. Elizabeth had died two months after their address was presented, but surely the new king "would be merciful and, withal, he was a great wise and sage prince. One of them said, 'What will not any prince do to gain a kingdom

for though he be a Protestant in show, yet is he Catholic in heart and mind.' Barneby said that if they had a head they might do some good, but they have not, and withal the chiefest of them are worse than heretics without any constancy."

And here the newcomer began to take part in the conversation. "Roberts told me," writes the spy, "that no Englishman might come to Spain but such as brought the letters commendatory either of the Archpriest, or of the Provincial of the Jesuits, or of some of the Assistants,* and if any would come to St Sebastian or any such place in Spain, they would apprehend them and take them for spies. That he was commanded by his Superiors to send as many as he could to Spain, and that they should be well intreated and welcomed there." He also said that being at dinner at the Clink, some said, "God be merciful to the Queen's soul"; but Mr Wright † would not. Why? "Because," he said, "she died out of the Church, and so dying was bound not to pray for her."

Father Roberts also told the spy "that there were divers priests shortly to come from Spain; how many he did not know": and that several well-known priests were gone a fortnight since to his own native Wales.‡

And here we meet with one of those "undesigned coincidences," which are so precious to the historian, by proving the authenticity of his sources. The paragraph runs as follows: "That More, who serveth the Cardinal at

* *I.e.* the Council of the Archpriest.

† The Rev. Thomas Wright was an ex-Jesuit. He was banished with Dom Roberts in May of this year.

‡ These included John and Edward Bennet, two brothers of a good Welsh family in Flintshire. Edward became a great friend of the Benedictines, and John was afterwards agent of the English clergy at Rome. Mush, who is also mentioned, was the well-known confessor and biographer of Ven. Margaret Clitherow, the martyr of York,

Bordeaux, will shortly come to London, as by a letter to his wife appeareth, and now she saith that the King will be favourable to him, for that he was in danger of his life for his mother's sake."

We cannot doubt that this Mr More was the English gentleman to whom John Roberts owed his conversion, and who had introduced him to the Cardinal Archbishop of Bordeaux, as Yepes recounts. He was evidently then in exile, owing to his sympathy with the cause of Mary Stuart, and it was at Paris that the adherents of that ill-fated Queen had their headquarters. Paget and Morgan and the Archbishop of Glasgow, all were constantly to be found at Paris, and More was, no doubt, their associate. The fact of his being in the household of the Cardinal explains at once why that prelate took notice of our hero; and this is also doubtless the reason that Roberts and his companions stayed at Bordeaux on their way from Spain.

We find a mention of this Mr More in two papers in the Record Office,* which make it probable that he may have accompanied our Benedictines from Bordeaux to Paris. "That there are two of the Mores come lately to Paris, who live very obscurely and will not be seen of any Englishman." "More † is a great man of high stature, and heretofore was a pensioner of the King of Spain, dwelt at Milan, and then returned to England with promise of preferment; but his hopes being frustrated, went into Flanders and there served, and got another pension, and upon some discontent left Flanders and came to Paris, where at his coming or immediately after, he got of the clergy fifty crowns and furnished himself, and now serveth a Cardinal." We do not know if he belonged to the family

* Dom. Addenda Elizabeth, xxxiv. 38, undated (? October 1602). We believe the true date is about February 1603.

† *Ibid.* No. 41.

of the famous Chancellor, but it is probable enough, for Blessed Thomas More's descendants were uniformly faithful to the Church.

The rest of the conversation reported with such minuteness does not concern the subject of this history. The fact, however, that it was so reported doubtless served to bring about an important result in the life of our martyr. For to this we may trace his first arrest, which took place very shortly after his arrival in London. We know from several writers that he was arrested and banished at least five times, and we have yet to trace as well as possible the history of these trials. Unfortunately, none of our authors give many details of these different imprisonments, and we have been forced to search State papers and contemporary books of all kinds to find at least some details of each. The fullest account is given by the French Life, which Dom Augustine brought out at Douay soon after the martyrdom, and which will be frequently quoted from in the course of this history.*

From this we learn that this first arrest followed shortly on his arrival in England, and that he was betrayed by a relative of his, who had pretended to be a Catholic, or at least to be willing to become one. It is possible that this relative was the very traitor who informed the Government of his conversation with the monk in Mr Barneby's room, and we have indeed a suspicion that it was none other than Lewis Owen himself.†

It is certain that this writer was a Merionethshire man, and that he knew Dom Roberts pretty intimately :

* See p. 271.

† If so, it is a strange coincidence that it was he who arrested our martyr's fellow-sufferer. The name of "Mr Sommers" occurs in a list of priests whom Lewis Owen claimed the honour of having taken since he came into England, in May 1609 (Westminster Archives, ix. No. 52, p. 143).

and it is at least a curious coincidence that the monk's sister Blanch should have been married to a man of the same name,* also a native of Merionethshire. If Lewis Owen were a relative of Cadwallador Owen, the parson-husband of Blanch Roberts, it will explain the curious mixture of praise and calumny, admiration and abuse, which characterise that worthy's account of the martyr.

He hated him as a Catholic, and yet was proud of his activity and fame; and while he calumniates him, shows him on the whole in a favourable light, and is careful to dwell on the ancient and honourable lineage from which he was sprung. Still, Owen was quite capable of betraying his nearest relative, if he could gain anything by it, and his conversion to the Faith was certainly no sincere

* Lewis Owen (according to the account of him given by Mr A. F. Pollard, in the "Dictionary of National Biography") was a Merionethshire man, born in 1572, and so a little older than the martyr. He was *perhaps* the grandson of Lewis Owen (+1555), Baron of the Exchequer of Carnarvon (Dwnn, "Heraldic Visitations," ii. 67, 238). He matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, December 4, 1590, but left the University without a degree, and spent the latter years of the reign of Elizabeth in foreign travel, especially in Spain. Wood ("Athen. Oxon." ii. 480), suspects that he entered the Society of Jesus at Valladolid. His name is not found among the students of the English College, but his books show an intimate acquaintance with this and the other English Seminaries abroad, except that of Lisbon. In 1605 he certainly visited England, for he published a "Key to the Spanish Language," dedicated to three Merionethshire gentlemen. But he was again at Valladolid in October 1605, with Mr Pickering Wootton, of whose conversion he gives a highly different account from the authentic one published by Br. Foley, (vol. ii. 253-256). His notice of the saintly Donna Luisa de Carvajal, is an abominable series of calumnies. He was in Madrid in 1607; in 1609 he published a book called "Catholique Traditions," "a work which would imply that he had not yet adopted his subsequent extreme anti-Romanist position." However, in 1610, we find him employed by the Government as a spy in Rome. In 1613 he is at Padua and Venice, and he does not seem to have relinquished this congenial employment till about 1620, when he returned to England, and settled down to literary work, with occasional lapses into his old trade (*e.g.* in 1628). His book "The Running Register," to which we owe so much of our knowledge of John Roberts, was published in 1626; in 1628 came out "The Unmasking of all Popish Priests, Friars, and Jesuits"; in 1629 "Speculum Jesuiticum." They are all to be found at the British Museum.

one.* However it may be, Dom Roberts was arrested and thrown into prison very shortly after the Government had become aware of his presence in the country. He did not, however, on this occasion, endure for long the hardships of a London prison, for on James' arrival, early in May, he was released by one of the acts of grace, common at the beginning of a new reign. The number of priests lying in chains at this time made the occasion a notable one. The prison doors were indeed thrown open, but these steadfast confessors of Christ were only to exchange one form of punishment for another, yet more grievous to their zealous hearts. All were driven into exile; for liberty in their native land was linked with a condition which these faithful men could not accept, *i.e.* attendance at the services of the Established Church. From Framlingham, Wisbech, the Tower, and other prisons, the priests were dragged off into perpetual banishment.

Dom Roberts was one of the latest captures, and he was also one of the last to be released. He was not, however, alone in his exile; indeed, he had as one of his companions a most distinguished confessor of the Faith, Father William Weston,† S.J., who had lain in prison for seventeen years, the last four and a half years of which were spent as a "close prisoner" in the Tower, a time of great suffering. His cell was so dark that the attempt to read his breviary had made him almost blind; the air was foul and the smell pestilent. For these four and a half years the venerable Father had been entirely isolated; not once had he been able to go to confession or speak face to

* Owen is too common a name in Wales to make the connection any more than a conjecture.

† See "Two Missionaries under Elizabeth," by Fr. John Morris, S.J., p. 277, *et seq.*

face with a friend. His habit of constant prayer and union with God had alone preserved him from going out of his mind, and he could hardly ever be induced after his release to allude to that terrible time.

Father Weston left the Tower, May 13, 1603, and found in a boat, which was waiting for him at the quay, his future companions, Dom Roberts, Thomas Wright, Andrew Bairley, a Dominican, and a poor priest named James West, of whom the "Douai Diary" says: "*lunaticus si non demens*": (his mind had no doubt been unhinged by his sufferings). A crowd of persons had assembled on the Tower Quay to see the confessors depart, and the Catholics fell at Father Weston's feet, kissing his hands, and begging his blessing with many tears; for they knew that they should see his face no more.

At last the old man was helped into the boat, where the other priests, with three royal pursuivants as travelling-companions, were awaiting him, and the party set out at once for Gravesend. Here they left the river, thence passed to Canterbury (where the heart of the monk must have overflowed as he thought of the vanished glories of the city of St Augustine), and so on to Dover. It was not till they reached Calais that they were left free by their guards to go their way. Father Weston went straight to St Omer, and Dom Roberts, with the others, to Douay. Later on (in 1614) the Jesuit became Rector of the Benedictine's old College at Valladolid, and they may possibly have met again on one of Dom Roberts' visits to Spain. If the monk (as is possible) had been prejudiced against the name of Father Weston by some of his friends among the Secular clergy, all such feelings must have speedily vanished at the sight of the venerable and saintly old man, who had lost his eyesight and his strength in the prisons of Elizabeth.

Dom Roberts reached Douay May 24, but he does not appear to have stayed there. He could not have remained long abroad, for, as Yepes says, "no sooner did they release him from prison then he went abroad to Flanders, France, or Spain, but he tarried in none of these places long enough to warm the earth, so great was the zeal that possessed him for the service of our Lord and the conversion of the souls of the English. He revolved as it were round the Island as his centre, and ever gained fresh spiritual victories therein, drawing back many and many a soul to the bosom of our Holy Mother the Church."

There was another powerful reason which drew him back quickly to England; that is the terrible plague which during the summer of 1603 made appalling ravages in London and its neighbourhood. His zeal in ministering to the plague-stricken forms one of the brightest jewels in his crown. It is this which is specially commemorated by every writer who has written of him, including Reyner in his "*Apostolatus Benedictinus*," and Bucelin in his "*Benedictus Redivivus*."* "This is he," the latter exclaims, "who held the salvation of the English people as more precious than his own life-blood . . . a man of great constancy, remarkable for zeal and charity; who while a most grievous pestilence was raging in London, with most persevering devotion endured to assist the sick and dying, to administer the Sacraments, and preach the faith for the sake of Christ Amid all the religious who have laboured in that Island, this man may almost be reckoned the chief, both as regards labour and the fruitfulness of preaching."

This plague is constantly mentioned in the letters of the period. King James' coronation was put off, owing to its ravages, and he was not crowned till St James' day,

* Fol. 167. Jesu Xti anno MDCX : S. P. Benedicti, MCXXX.

July 24. Even then the pestilence was so terrible, that he fled into the country the next day, but the infection pursued him wherever he went. Luis Munoz, the Spanish biographer of Donna Luisa de Carvajal, who had the worst possible opinion of the English climate, and English ways in general, says of London: "It is a miserable place (*lugarazo*), very expensive, and the climate so dreadful, that there is scarcely a day in the year when one might not fancy oneself in winter. The air is so thick and heavy that it produces many ailments.

"Besides the one great plague of heresy, it has others as numerous as those of Egypt. A pestilence which they call *the* plague continually recurs. It raged more or less during the first six years that Donna Luisa spent in England (1606-1612). When it is severe it carries off almost one-half of the population. The more zealous among the Puritans say that it is a great blessing to die of the plague, and a particular token of God's favour; and if any one asks them—'Of what did your friend die?' they answer in a solemn manner, 'Of the Lord's token.' They take no precautions against contagion, because, say they, if a man is fated to die of that disease, there is no use in trying to get out of the way of it. Every one goes to the funeral; afterwards the house is shut up with all who are in it, and they feed them at their own expense for a month. An old wretch is posted at the door by way of guarding it, but he lets any one go out who will give him as much as a piece of bread. They sell the clothes and the bedding on the very day of a person's death, and there are always plenty of purchasers. The folly of this people and their Government is incredible. And with all that they tell you that London is an earthly paradise!"*

* "Life of Donna Luisa de Carvajal," by Lady Georgiana Fullerton, p. 228.

This picture is no doubt exaggerated, but the fact that the plague was constantly recurring is undoubted. In 1603 and 1609, it seems to have been particularly bad.*

We find constant references to it in the letters of the foreign Ambassadors and Ministers in London, transcripts of which are in the Record Office.† Thus on July 31, 1603, Degli Effetti writes to the Nuncio Del Bufalo in France, that in the last week 1700 persons died of it in London alone. In September it is said to be growing continually worse. On October 20 we hear that the Protestant Ministers were preaching that it was against Christian charity to separate the infected from the healthy, so that no wonder it spread continually.

It was into this abyss of misery, both spiritual and temporal, that Father Roberts threw himself with the most heroic charity. Ever a martyr in will, he put before him the example of these priests of Alexandria, who died ministering to the plague-stricken, and earned a special eulogium in the Roman Martyrology. He laboured night and day in the foul and pestiferous alleys of the great city, seeking out the poor Catholics who lay in the fever-dens of Westminster and Southwark, and ministering to them with entire and devoted self-forgetfulness. Great was the harvest he reaped ; many were the souls, long dead in heresy and sin, whom he restored to God ; many the deathbeds to which he carried the Sacraments of strength and consolation ; many the penitents who poured out in his sympathising ear the long sad story of their sin and sorrow. He multiplied himself to meet the needs of the

* In Defoe's "Journal of the Plague Year" (Appendix III.), is to be found a "return of the numbers as fell by the Plague, as given in the Bills of Mortality." From this we find that in 1603 there perished no less than 30,351 persons. In 1606, 1607, 1608, the deaths were over 2000, while in 1609 they rose to 4240.

† Roman Transcripts, P.R.O. (Bliss), 1603.

plague-stricken, and his charity was never forgotten among the Catholics of London. Nor was the other object of his mission forgotten. This was, as we have heard him tell the spy, to find out young men with religious vocations, and to send them over to make their noviceship in Spain, and thus in time to revive the Benedictine Order in England. He was exceedingly active and zealous in this work, as the great number of monks professed in Spain is sufficient to show us.

Owen gives the same testimony in his own coarse but striking way: "Within a short time (with the helpe of the Secular priests and their Benefactors and Fauourites . . .), hee begot here many Proselytes or Popelings, and hauing so done, transported them into *Spaine* to be trayned up in the Monasticall discipline."

One of his first conquests in this line was indeed a very notable one; for it was a young man who was destined not only to become a fervent and holy monk, but even to follow in the steps of his spiritual Father to the very summit of his Calvary. William Scott of Chigwell in Essex, was a graduate of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, when he made the acquaintance of our hero,* who had returned from his banishment. He was not only received into the Church by the zealous missionary, but he was also fired with an ardent longing to join the great Order to which England owed the faith. Nor was he the only postulant who presented himself during the few months which elapsed between Dom Roberts' return and his second arrest. They seem to have lived with the monk until he could find a safe occasion for their journey to Spain.

* No writer has hitherto identified the "Spiritual Father" of Ven. Maurus Scott; but a comparison of the dates of his entry into the Order, and of his return to England, as given by Escalona, the Chronicler of the Abbey of St Facundus of Sahagun (lib. vii. cap. iv. p. 213), proves the facts as we have related them.

Their maintenance was defrayed by Dom Roberts' numerous friends and admirers. "Hee became very famous," says Owen, "among the English Papists, and many resorted to him, some of them (especially such as were of the Iesuitical faction) out of curiosity to see a *Benedictin* monk once againe in England; and others came out of a blind zeale to his fatherhood; but howsoever, they did all minister and contribute very largely towards his reliefe and the rest of the English *Monklings*."

He also received many persons, both priests and lay people as *confratres* or oblates of the Order, admitting them to participation in the spiritual privileges of the Benedictine family.* Among these is possibly to be reckoned the glorious martyr, Ven. Robert Drury.† The Ven. Matthew Flathers, another martyr, also seems to have been a Benedictine Oblate.

In the midst of his absorbing and anxious labours the missionary's heart was saddened by the events happening in the political world—events full of mournful omen for the persecuted Catholics. James had promised to remit the cruel fines exacted for recusancy, but by Cecil's advice he broke his word. If the Catholics, he said openly, were of a different religion from his own, they could not be

* This gave great offence to some. See a letter of Dr Singleton's, to Fr. Floyd, April 9, 1606: "You must understand that the Benedictines in England receive many *donates*, and omit nothing to make themselves populous and a great multitude, imagining to do by number what they cannot by virtue" (Tierney-Dodd, vol. iv. p. cexix.).

† See the curious account of his arraignment, and trial, and execution, printed in 1607, and reprinted in the Harleian Miscellany, iii. p. 38. "There were certain papers shown at Tyburn which had been found about him, of very dangerous and traitorous nature, and among them also was his Benedictine faculty under seal, expressing what power and authority he had from the Pope to make men, women, and children heere of his Order; what indulgence and pardons he could grant them," etc. He is perhaps referred to by Dom Anselm Beech (Tierney-Dodd, vol. iv. p. ccxiii.).

good subjects. One can hardly wonder that the disappointment drove a man like Watson into crime, but his insane plot did more harm than good to the Catholic cause, as it was revealed by Dom Roberts' friend Barneby to the Government. In so doing, that priest acted both according to the promise made in the protestation of allegiance which he had signed, and in obedience to the direct command of the Archpriest. If the Archpriest had not been so prompt, he would have been forestalled by the Provincial of the Jesuits.

The King was struck by the loyalty of the Catholics, and at the earnest pleading of Sir Thomas Tresham (who had himself suffered fines and imprisonment during twenty-one years), consented to remit the fines "as long as they behaved as loyal subjects."* But, as a Protestant historian says, "no remission of fines was likely to be lasting if it was based on the misapprehension that toleration was only a step to a hypocritical conversion, and this was the leading idea of James, who could not understand the noble constancy of men like Tresham." The unwonted peace that ensued caused a great increase of activity among the Catholics. In less than nine months after Elizabeth's death, no less than one hundred and forty priests, including our Benedictines, landed in England, and the conversions were very numerous.† The official returns of the recusants show that there were ten thousand more Catholics in the second year of James I. than there were at his accession.‡ This much annoyed the King, and before long the persecution burst out afresh. On February 22, 1603-4, he issued a proclamation banish-

* July 17, 1603.

† December $\frac{1}{2}$. P.R.O. Roman Transcripts (Bliss).

‡ S.P. Dom. viii. 30. From January to August the numbers in the Diocese of Chester alone grew from 2400 to 3433. S.P. Dom. ix. 28.

ing all the priests from the kingdom. They were to leave by March 19 (the day fixed for the opening of Parliament), under heavy penalties.

It was just about this time, no doubt, when the clouds grew black once more on the horizon, that Dom John Roberts was arrested for the second time. He was on his way to Spain to attend the General Chapter of his Congregation, which was to be held at Easter, and was to discuss the affairs of the English Mission.

He had with him four young postulants, including, no doubt, William Scott. As they stood on the pier of some seaport in the act of embarking, they were seized under suspicion of being Catholics, and were hurried off to gaol.

Fortunately our hero was not known to be a priest, and his youthful appearance, (which was often remarked on by his friends), doubtless led his captors to think that he was merely a student on his way to one of the Seminaries. The result was that after a few months' detention he was set free. He seems, however, to have given up the idea of going to Spain, as it was too late to attend the Chapter.* Dom Augustine, however, went, and very possibly took the postulants with him. The future martyr, William Scott, had at any rate reached Spain by the summer, as we find he took the habit in the famous Abbey of St Facundus of Sahagun, on August 4, 1604; it must be remembered that he was never in one of the Seminaries, but came out straight from England, as he says himself.

The English Benedictine monk, who called on the Nuncio at Paris, at the beginning of April 1604, was therefore no doubt Dom Augustine, and not our martyr. The episode, however, must not be entirely passed over.

* We gather this from his own expression. Speaking of his banishment of 1606, he says: "This my second being beyond seas" (Examination, December 21, 1607).

Writing on April 6, to Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandino, the Nuncio Del Bufalo says: * "There passed by here on his way to Spain, a few days back, an English priest of the Order of St Benedict who came from England and was about to visit his General: and he related to me that when the Edict was published in London against the priests (commanding them to depart from the kingdom), and was fixed up in a public place in London . . . the following morning it was found that all the paragraph which referred to the affection which his Majesty bore to his Holiness had been scratched out, as also the other important sentence about the Council; and, as it is said, the first clause was cancelled by the Puritans, and the second by the Protestants, both of these parties having publicly made great lamentation that such things should have been contained in the Edict.

"The said English priest having been brought up in one of those Seminaries in Spain, told me that in England he was constantly at the house of the Ambassador Tassi,† who had told him that he had complained to the King and Queen of the publication of this Edict, and that both had excused themselves, saying the Council had put such

* Roman Transcripts (Bliss), "Archivio Vaticano, Nunziatura di Francia," vol. xlix. fol. 73.

† Don Juan de Taxis, Count of Villa Medina, Spanish Ambassador in England. Dom Augustine, writing to Mr Nicholas Fitzherbert (January 21, 1606), from Brussels, says: "I protest unto you upon my salvation that the last yeare I was appointed by all the chiefe Catholickes of England, to deale with the Ambassador of Spain, D. Juan de Tassis, about the buying of a toleration for three score thousand pounds. When he had brought it to such a point, that by them [*i.e.* the Jesuits] it was thought certayne, then went they about to discredit mee with the Ambassador, and the Ambassador with the Catholickes, which when they could not doe, they would needs persuade them, that Fr. Persons was the only fit man to manage this business" (Westminster Archives, viii. 99). I quote this not only for its own intrinsic interest, but also as a confirmation of the probability of the monk referred to above being Dom Augustine, and not Dom John. The former was Superior, and was, as we see, in constant communication with the Ambassador.

pressure on them that they were not able to do otherwise; but that the Edict would not be executed with any rigour; and in fact the said English priest informed me that some of the priests who are opposed to the Jesuits have already received permission to remain . . . [he also informed me] that the King does not attend properly to business but is always going a-hunting, just as the Queen cares for nothing but balls and vanities. That the peace with Spain continued firm, and that the Lords of the Council had begun to get the King completely in their power, and that it was doubtful if they would not again try to exact from the Catholics that tax which up to this they had been exempted from paying."

The part of the Royal Proclamation so much objected to, ran as follows: "Amongst which foreign powers, although we acknowledge ourselves so much beholden to the now Bishop of Rome [Clement VIII.] for his kind offices, and private temporal carriage towards us in many things, as we shall ever be ready to requite the same towards him (as Bishop of Rome, in state and condition of a secular prince), yet, when we consider and observe the course and claim of that See, we have no reason to imagine that princes of our religion and profession can expect any assurance long to continue, unless it might be assented, by mediation of other princes Christian, that some good course might be taken (*by a general Council, free and lawfully called*) to pluck up those roots of dangers and jealousies which arise for cause of religion, as well between princes and princes, as between them and their subjects, and to make it manifest that no state or potentate either hath or can challenge power to dispose of earthly kingdoms and monarchies, or to dispense with subjects' obedience to their natural sovereigns. In which charitable action there is no prince living, that will

be readier than we shall be, to concur, even to the uttermost of our power, not only out of a particular disposition to live peaceably with all states and princes of Christendom, but because such a settled amity might, by a union in religion, be established among Christian princes as might enable us all to resist the common enemy."

These were fair words, but, as Tierney remarks,* to show their hypocritical nature, it is only necessary to observe that the Pope had already in two breves commanded the clergy to abstain, and to induce others to abstain, from all attempts against the Government; that he had actually ordered Dr Gifford, Dean of Lille, to wait on the King with an offer to withdraw from the country any priest who might be an object either of danger or suspicion. Finally, only twelve days before the proclamation was issued, the King himself had not only avowed his utter detestation of the superstitious religion of the Papists, but had also commanded the judges "to see the laws speedily executed with all rigour." In fact, he had openly declared that he was so far from favouring Catholicism, that he would rather see his son and heir buried before his eyes than know he would second toleration to the Papists after he was gone. The Benedictines had too much reason to fear that the weak and perfidious son of Mary Stuart would betray the Catholics to the fierce hatred of the Council. How should one who had not stirred a finger to save his mother from her destroyers, risk anything for the sake of those whose chief crime had been fidelity to the cause for which that mother suffered? †

* Tierney-Dodd, iv. p. 9.

† Gardiner in his recent work, "What the Gunpowder Plot Was" (chapter iv.), says all that can be said on James' side. As to this Proclamation, he says (p. 160): "The most important of its results was that it produced the gunpowder plot."

As to the cruel fines, the King had already determined that they were too valuable an aid to his exhausted exchequer to be discarded. He had given the Catholics "a year of probation" he declared, but no more could be expected from his clemency. Yet so late as September last, the King had repeated his assurances to a deputation of Catholics, that he would keep his word, and that the ruinous fines should not be exacted.*

As to the General Council, it was a favourite idea of the King's. He had taken alarm at the growing numbers of the recusants, at the discovery that the Queen herself was secretly a Catholic, and in communication with the Pope, and so was ready to fly to any scheme, however wild and impracticable. In May he addressed the House of Commons on the subject. Why, he asked, could not the Pope consent to the meeting of a General Council, at which all the Churches would be represented, and at which, as Mr Gardiner dryly remarks, he himself "would undoubtedly have expected to exercise a predominant influence." The Pope, however, was hardly disposed to agree to a General Council, which should be a sort of glorified Hampton Court Conference, "in which the assembled Bishops were in mute admiration to give their willing consent to the views of the royal theologian"; nor, as we have seen, did the English people share his admiration for the scheme.

But we must follow Dom Augustine to the Chapter General, as its deliberations were to have an important influence on the Mission which our martyr had so deeply at heart. As we have seen, during the last few months postulants had been flocking both from England and from the English Seminaries on the Continent to the Benedictine

* Gardiner, "History of England," i. 141.

Abbeys of Spain.* The general bad health of their new subjects were causing the Superiors much anxiety, and it was therefore agreed at this Chapter "that all, or the most part of the English, should be put into one or two Abbeys in some temperate part of *Spaine*, which was best agreeing to their nature and complexion, whereof *Onia* was one, which is an Abbey situated in the Kingdom or Province of *Castilla la Vieia*, near to the mountains of *Asturias* and *Biscaia*, where they continued many yeeres, sending such Monks into England, when they were made, and receiving other students into their places as they thought fittest." †

What really seems to have happened, according to Yepes, was that the Abbots, while continuing to receive novices in the different Abbeys, agreed to send the young men as soon as they were professed to make their studies in these two monasteries. The Spanish Congregation had several of these monastic Colleges for their junior monks, and two seem now to have been reserved for the English. Yepes says, indeed, that the Abbots founded these new Colleges, "one of Arts, and one of Theology for the English alone, assigning them professors and lectors to teach them controversy, etc.," but by this he does not mean, we think, that these monasteries were new foundations, but that they were then allotted for this new use. The Chapter also decided, he says, with the approbation of Pope Clement VIII., to send more monks into England. We can imagine how eagerly Dom Augustine pleaded for this, and his toils

* The Valladolid Registers give the following students as having joined the Benedictine Order, with the approximate dates:—Thomas Singleton (no date); John More (July 1603); William Granger (August 1603); Thomas Emerson (August 1603); Edward Gifford (August 1603); Andrew Sherley (September 1603); Louis Cook (September 1603); Hugh Helmes (September 1603); Robert Appleby (September 1603); John Lidersal (October 1603).

† "Running Register," p. 88.

and sufferings in the mission-field must have been more eloquent than his words.

Meanwhile Dom John was working zealously in London. It was doubtless with the view of getting into contact with the students of the Inns of Courts, that he had made "his *Cell* or *chamber* in the house of one Master *Knight*, a *Scrivener*, that dwelt in *Holborn* over against *Chancery Lane*." Unfortunately for him, as the sequel will show, he was not the only or the principal lodger there. But for about a year all went well, and while the clouds on the Catholic horizon grew ever blacker and heavier, the monk laboured on humbly and courageously in his Master's service. "At length," writes Owen, "having obtained, or at least-wise vsurped (for he was a man of aspiring spirit) the title of *Provinciall* of all the English *Benedictin* monks then residing in England (who were then not many), hee became very famous." *

The persecution had been set loose again in July, and was now raging more fiercely than ever. The Parliament had passed an act confirming all the cruel laws of Elizabeth, and even increasing them by fresh vexations. It was made impossible for the unfortunate Catholics to educate their children either across the seas or at home. Those educated abroad were declared incapable of inheriting, or purchasing, or enjoying any lands, annuities, chattels, legacies, or sums of money within the realm; those who should convey them across the seas were to be severely punished, while if they remained at home, no tutor could be employed to teach them who was not licensed by the Ordinary, under a

* Dom Roberts of course never bore this title. Dom Augustine Bradshaw was the Vicar-General or Superior of the Spanish Benedictines, employed on the English Mission, while the Cassinese had their own Superior. No doubt, however, he acted as Superior in Dom Augustine's absence. He denied at his trial that he had held any formal office of Superior.

penalty of a fine of two pounds a day, to be levied both on master and tutor.

So all through that sad year the troubles of the Catholics increased day by day. Petition after petition was presented to the King, recounting the services they had shown in his mother's cause, protesting loyalty, reminding James of his reiterated promises of toleration, offering to fight "in the foremost ranks of the battle" against any invaders of their country, renouncing all temporal authority but that of the King, and even offering to gage "life for life" for the fidelity of their clergy *—but all in vain; prayers and promises were alike disregarded. Martyrdoms became frequent once more.† In September 1604, twenty-one priests were shipped off into perpetual banishment, and on February 15, 1605, forty-nine Catholics were indicted at the Sessions held in the County of Middlesex alone. The same thing was happening all over the country. For instance, in the Eastern Counties, 700 recusants were haled before the Judge, of whom 200 were new converts since the summer of 1604; of these 700 only two "conformed themselves," *i.e.* agreed to go to the Protestant Service, and one of those "hath since relapsed and withdrawn himself from the Church."

In the West of England 924 were tried, of whom 364 were newly converted, and the official returns from which we quote, adds: "There is information of many more recusants in these counties, but not yet indicted, by reason that the Bishop's officials, specially of Sarum and Exon, have not exhibited their presentments." In all, it appears that 6126 recusants were indicted throughout England

* One of these petitions is printed in Tierney-Dodd, iv. Appendix x. Another is analysed in Butler's "Memorials of English Catholics," ii. 84-87.

† The first was in July 16, 1604, of a priest and a layman. The latter was hanged for "assisting" the priest.

this year, and of these a large proportion were recent converts.*

We have already spoken of the cruel and crushing fines that rapidly reduced these faithful men to beggary. But another cruel indignity was to be introduced by James. His Scottish favourites were needy and rapacious, and he hit upon a notable plan to satisfy their greed. "Each individual was ordered to search out as many Catholics as possible, and to select from the more opulent those who were most likely to answer his purpose. The King in his bounty then "bestowed" these persons upon him, *i.e.* he made over to him whatever claims the Crown possessed, or might afterwards possess on them for the fines of recusancy; and authorised him either to proceed at law for the recovery of the penalties or to accept a grant of money by way of compensation for the amount." The "hungry Scots" fastened like vampires on their prey. The state papers are full of these grants of "the benefit of recusants" to Court favourites.

Thus, for instance, we find that a friend of Dom Roberts, Mr Draycot of Draycot, in Staffordshire, was handed over on March 5, 1607, to a certain William Hickes, who was to enjoy "the benefit of his recusancy," as the phrase ran. Again, on December 31, 1609, the same steadfast confessor, with several others, was "bestowed on" one Thomas Lloyd.† In 1606 we get a list of recusants from whom the King took two-thirds of their property.‡ It includes the names of Sir Thomas Arundel, John Townley, John Talbot of Grafton, Richard Cotton of Warblington, and other well-known Catholic gentlemen;

* Tierney-Dodd, iv. Appendix xiv.

† S.P. Dom. xxvi. 70, and l. 94. For Mr Draycot's connection with the martyr, *see* Appendix F.

‡ *Ibid.*, xxiii. 37.

their lands and estates were granted to Lord Hay, the chief of the Scottish courtiers. Those of others were granted to Sir Roger Aston, Sir James Simple, Mr Robert Douglas, and the king's infamous favourite, Robert Carr. Dom Gasquet, who has studied the Recusant Rolls most patiently and exhaustively, tells us in a recent publication,* that "quite a volume might be made of the various suggestions proffered by hungry officials setting out how more might be made for the Royal Exchequer out of the recusants' lands. One paper sets forth particulars by which property leased at £2210, 4s. 3d. a year, might be made to produce £5779, 8s. 9d. . . . The amounts as stated (in the official account-books of the Exchequer) to have been forfeited, became so enormous that one almost hesitates to believe them." At the end of the reign of Elizabeth the recusant fines amounted to about £13,395 a year, but James had not been nine years on the throne before they had swollen to the enormous, almost incredible, sum of £371,060, which would amount in modern figures to £4,452,720!†

Dom Gasquet says there can be no reasonable doubt of the accuracy of these figures; and they are enough to show the intolerable state of tyranny under which the unhappy Catholics lay, whose only crime was their fidelity to the faith of their fathers. To this must be added, as has been said, the intolerable vexations inflicted by the vile tribe of pursuivants and priest-catchers, who were ever breaking into Catholic houses, ransacking and plundering them, under pretext of searching for priests or for religious books or objects of devotion. No one was

* "*Hampshire Recusants*" (London, 1895), p. 43.

† This is Dom Gasquet's computation. It is only fair to say that Mr Gardiner in his book on the Gunpowder Plot (p. 120, note), considers such an estimate grossly exaggerated. He would be inclined to multiply money by four or five only, in order to obtain its present value.

secure in their own house by day or night; and those who did harbour a priest must have lived in a state of constant terror.

It is evident that only the few could go on for long paying these extortionate fines, and, as a matter of fact, the Exannual Rolls are full of long lists of bad debts owed by recusants who had nothing wherewith to pay. Poor people who had no property to be confiscated were frequently "sold up," all their goods and chattels valued and sold for the benefit of the Crown; even if they were permitted in some cases to buy them in at the official valuation, they had to remain, as Dom Gasquet says, "under the crushing sense that all their worldly goods were known to be the property of the Crown, and held solely at the mercy of some official in the district. Instances are not wanting of the actual sales of every bit of furniture, and even of the house itself, over the heads of a family noted for recusancy." *

What wonder if, as the year 1604 began its course, and the proclamation of February 22 ushered in the new era of persecution, thoughts of despair, wild schemes of vengeance began to shape themselves in the brains of a few Catholic gentlemen: what wonder if, before the following year had passed, Europe was horrified by the disclosure of a plot which has ever since been thrown in the teeth of English Catholics, though its chief guilt surely lay at the door of their remorseless and crafty persecutors?

* "Hampshire Recusants" (London, 1895), p. 30.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GATEHOUSE PRISON.

WE have fortunately no need to enter into the details of the Gunpowder Plot, as our hero was in no possible way concerned with it. Its discovery, however, had an important effect on his fortunes, as we are now about to relate.

It has been recently maintained, with much ingenuity, that the traitor who disclosed the plot to the Government, at a more or less early stage in its development, was Thomas Percy, one of the conspirators. This man was a Gentleman Pensioner at Court, and a kinsman of the Earl of Northumberland. He had been very dissipated and wild in his life, and though it was said he had now become a Catholic and a fervent penitent, there is grave reason to doubt his sincerity.

When the plot was made public, he fled towards the North, but in the search that was made for him, his house in Holborn was of course visited. In it was found his wife, who, however, asserted that she had not seen her husband for some months.

There is some mystery about Percy's conjugal relations; in fact, he appears to have been a bigamist. This poor lady whose privacy was thus roughly intruded on, is said by Dom Roberts himself to have been Percy's *first* wife.* She

* In his examination before the Bishop of London, December 21, 1607. A document in the possession of the Old Brotherhood of the Secular Clergy. See Appendix G.

must therefore, no doubt, have been his lawful partner, but he had at the same time another wife in Warwickshire. This lady was Martha, sister of Christopher and John Wright of Ploughland Hall, in Holderness, two of Percy's associates in the Gunpowder Plot. She was arrested at Lapworth, in Warwickshire, together with Dorothy and Margaret, wives of her two brothers, and other relatives of the conspirators, and was sent to London by the County Justices on November 12, as we know from the letter in the Record Office. She was a young woman of about twenty-five, and had been married to Percy nearly twelve years. It is interesting to record that she was the aunt of the celebrated and holy Mary Ward, and this pious virgin in her "Confessions" tells us that her father had meant her to marry Percy herself. Fortunately her young aunt attracted his attention, and Mary, whose heart was given to a heavenly bridegroom, escaped. Her devout thanksgivings for this favour would have been even more heartfelt had she known what a scoundrel Percy was, and that he had already probably a lawful wife.* Martha Wright lived quietly in London, in great retirement, after the traitor's tragical death.

We know nothing of the history of her predecessor, who seems to have been almost entirely deserted by her husband. Anyhow, the fact that Dom Roberts was her

* See "Life of Mary Ward," by Mary E. Chambers, vol. i. p. 19. Fr. Gerard in his recent work, "What was the Gunpowder Plot?" has been the first of modern writers to revive the story of Percy's bigamy. The question presents several difficulties: How was it, for instance, that the two Wrights could be so friendly with a man who had seduced their sister into a bigamous marriage? Just possibly, however, the "first wife" was, or was supposed to be, Percy's victim. There may have been some impediment, only discovered after the marriage, which gave him an excuse to throw her over, without any injury to her character or good faith. Bishop Goodman says that he knew a lady who was personally acquainted with both wives; she said the former was a quiet person, who made her living by teaching. This exactly corresponds with what we hear of Dom Roberts' friend.

intimate friend, shows her to have been a fervent Catholic. No doubt she found in the exercises of the proscribed religion, a balm for the injuries she had to endure.

The capture was made by Justice Grange, who lost no time in making his report to Cecil.* Here is his letter in full:—

“RIGHT HONBLE.—The gentleman whom you desire to have apprehended hath a house in the upper end of Holborn, in the parish of St Giles in the Fields, where his wife is at this instant. She saith her husband liveth not with her, but being attendant on the Rt. Honble. Earl of Northumberland, and liveth and lodgeth as she supposeth with him. She hath not seen him since summer ; she liveth very private and teacheth children. I have caused some to watch the house, as also to guard her until your Lordship’s pleasure be further known. Thus resting at your command I humbly take leave.—Yr. Lp. to be commanded,
T. GRANGE.

"ST GILES IN THE FIELDS.

"5 November 1605."

And then comes, written in the corner of the sheet, a postscript which for us contains all the interest of the letter:—

“In searching Thomas Percy his house one John Roberts was taken there, newly entered booted as having ridden. He confesseth himself of the Romish religion, and that his intendment is to go over to the Archduke. I have committed him to the charge of the constable until your Lordship’s pleasure be further known.”

“His Lordship’s pleasure” was that Roberts should be committed to the Gatehouse Prison, and thus he began his third and longest imprisonment.†

The capture of our martyr in the house of Mrs Percy filled the authorities with hope that they would be able

* P.R.O., "Gunpowder-Plot Book," vol. i. p. 15.

† Owen says he was committed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

to involve him in the fate of the conspirators, but as we shall see, the Bishop of London, while reproaching him at his final trial with being found "on the very day of the Powder Treason in the house of the wife of its author and contriver," was forced to admit, in answer to the martyr's manly protest, that he had nothing whatever to do with the conspiracy.

The news of his arrest made some sensation; it is alluded to in several contemporary letters; for instance, in a letter of the Archbishop of Tarento, Nuncio in Flanders, to Rome (December 12, 1605).^{*} We find from one letter[†] that our martyr was just about to celebrate Holy Mass when he was taken.

There is no doubt that this house of Mrs Percy "in the upper end of Holborn" is to be identified with "Master Knight's house in Holborn over against Chancery Lane," of which Owen speaks: and that it really was Father Roberts' habitual lodging. The fact is proved by the mass of papers belonging to him which were found in the house, among them being a letter addressed to "Mr Richard Brown at Mr Thomas Knyght's, a scrivener over against Chancery Lane's end." We are thus able to identify the exact site of the house where our martyr lived and laboured so long.

An account and summary of the various papers found in the search is to be found in two documents in the Record Office.[‡] They are printed in full in the Appendix,[§] but some account must be given of them here. The first is headed "*Points and names of persons discovered in the papers found in Percy's house.*" The first is a letter from a

^{*} Roman Transcripts (Bliss), P.R.O.

[†] S.P. Dom. lxi. 47.

[‡] *Ibid.*, xvi. 10-11.

[§] See Appendix D.

Thomas Courteney to a Mr Lambert, dated October 5, 1605. We can only conjecture that the *alias* of Lambert must have been taken by one of the Benedictines, in honour of Ven. Mark Barkworth, who had used the same name. A parallel case is that of Ven. Edward Campion, the martyr who adopted this surname out of devotion to the great Jesuit martyr.

It is very tantalising not to have copies of the letters and papers, but only meagre extracts and lists of names. The letter just mentioned says that a certain Mr Soame "hath desired that he might be admitted among you, and that you would take order for the receiving of some with you in Italy, because when we are gone, there will be an end." This looks as if "Mr Lambert" were one of the Italian Benedictines. The writer goes on to plead for a special friend of his, Mr Richard Cholmley,* a prisoner for conscience sake at York, who was still kept in confinement by the Archbishop, though he had yielded up two-thirds of his living to the King. "If you could procure to deal with some hungry Scott who wants twenty or thirty pounds, or some other means to the Council Chamber, my lord of Shrewsbury would doubtless favour it." Dom Roberts' name is mentioned in the letter, as are those of "Mr Sadler" (no doubt Dom Vincent Sadler, afterwards to be of the first monks of the revived English Congregation), "Mr Tonstall" (perhaps the future Benedictine martyr) and "Mr Preston," who is of course Dom Thomas Preston, the Superior of the Cassinese Benedictines in England. It would indeed be interest-

* As to this Richard Cholmeley, of Brandesby, Esq., see Fr. Morris' "Catholics of York under Elizabeth," p. 464. There is in the Record Office a pardon made out for him and his wife, for relieving Seminary Priests since the beginning of the reign. This is dated December 11, 1609. Dom James I. vol. 1. (Docquet). It was obtained at the suit of the Earl of Montgomery, who got £1500 for it.

ing to know what is said of them, but we have the bare list of names. Then comes a letter to Mr Richard Browne—a letter dated from St Malo, October 7, 1605. (Richard Browne was probably the *alias* of Dom Roberts.) Dom Augustine Bradshaw is mentioned in the letter under his *alias* of White.

The next document is entitled: "*Points mentioned in the papers and letters found in Pearcey's house, likely to be the priest Roberts' who was taken there.*" This is much fuller and more interesting. It begins with a warning against Father Preston, who is said to be "great with the Bishop of London, and therefore to be taken heed of." It is well known what scandal Father Preston gave later on by his persistent advocacy of the Oath of Allegiance.

Then there follows a letter from a Benedictine named "John Worsley" (whom we have not been able to identify), who makes several complaints of the treatment he had received from some Jesuit Fathers, and adds "that the English Benedictines of Spayne are the only men for the enterprise of England, having continual supply of men and money, and have more learning than those of Italy." Dom "Worsley" wrote from the North, "it seems about Cumberland," on October 7. This letter was addressed to "Mr Henry Browne or Lawrence Lambert." The great obscurity which still hangs over the names taken by the Benedictines, makes it impossible to identify these monks with any certainty.

In another letter, dated February 10, the searchers note that the following phrase occurs: "*Spes in eo est qui Angliam a paganismo per vros conversam iterum ab heresi restituet Catholicæ Ecclesiæ.*"

"In two Italian letters from the Procurator-General of the Jesuits (*sic*) of Rome and Florence to Father Augustine,

Englishman, he is willed with all speed and secrecy to repair to England, about a matter of a high end, to meet with the priests in London, whose coming they expect with great desire. Feb. 12." *

"I take this fa. Augustine† to be Roberts, and it may be it is he which by the name of Richard Browne, the Venetian Ambassador Molini sent to Venice, to Guistiniani, who is to succeed him here as appeareth by both their passports to him, both in May and October last, he having been twice sent thither this year."

"Other matters of any note there is not in all these papers but only licenses, indulgences, jubilees, and such trumpery as priests use always to carry about them."

It is noteworthy that no mention of politics could be found among Dom Roberts' papers; nothing that even the most perverse ingenuity could twist into treasonable matter. In fact his enemies, as we shall see, had to fully acknowledge his complete innocence of the plot, or any other treason against the State.

Another person was taken prisoner at the same time as Dom Roberts. This was a lady named Frances Archer, a *protégée*, strangely enough, of Sir Anthony Ashley, Clerk of the Privy Council. This we learn from the letters of the notorious Thomas Phelipes, who had so much to do in bringing Mary Stuart to her death. Sir Anthony had incurred the enmity of this informer, who denounced him

* It is probable that this Father Augustine is not Bradshaw, but the Cassinese monk, Dom Augustine Smith, or Smithson. He was professed at Monte Cassino in 1592, and came to England this very year, 1605, where he acted as Superior of the Italian Benedictines. A letter of his exists in the Westminster Archives, about the founding of an English convent of Benedictine nuns in France. Two others have been printed in the "*Spicilegium Benedictinum*," of St Benedict's, Rome (No. 5, p. 13, *et seq.*), from the Archives of San Pietro, in Perugia.

† It is impossible that the Richard Browne, of the Venetian embassies, should be our martyr.

to Cecil * (February 3, 1611), but he succeeded in turning the tables on his accusers, and brought them before the Star Chamber for conspiracy against him. This is one of Phelipes' accusations. "He was charged at Salisbury with the keeping of Frances Archer, a Popish harlott,† who ware Garnett's flesh about her neck for a relic. And that for her sake he did discover divers secrets of Counsell to Seminary Priests and Recusants. Abused your Lordship's name to the then Lord Chief Justice for the delivery out of prison of one that was taken at Percy's wife's house the morning the powder treason should have been put in execution, and come to hear mass there to be song by Roberts. He was commanded to produce her, and promised to do it, if he could, upon his alleegance. He hath not done it, but hath relieved her since. He confessed before your Lordship in July that he had sent her ten pound. But she having been schooled to answer all questions hath been kept and maintained by him ever since. It shall be proved by those who have spoken with her in his house within these three months."

It is certainly strange to find any connection between our Benedictine and one of Sir Anthony's position. But it appears that the Clerk of the Privy Council was a Catholic at heart, though he never professed his faith. He was the grandfather of the first Earl of Shaftesbury, and thus the progenitor of a statesman remarkable for Puritan zeal. But we have yet another proof of his interest in Dom Roberts.

Among the State papers ‡ may be found a letter from a

* Dom James I. lxi. 47. Sir James Creighton seems to have been at the bottom of the matter.

† This charge against Mrs Archer's character, rests entirely on the perjured evidence of Phelipes. Such insinuations and charges were too common in the current Protestant literature.

‡ Dom James I. vol. xviii. Nos. 10, 11, and 81. See Appendix E.

prisoner in the Gatehouse, named Richard Barrett, to Dom Roberts, then a close prisoner in that house. It is enclosed in one to another prisoner, Thomas Ward, with the prayer to deliver it "to Mr Roberts, with as much convenience as you can and my commendations." In the letter, which is headed, "+JESUS MARIA," he begs Dom Roberts to send "two or three words" to recommend him to a lady who would assist him if she knew he was a worthy object. This letter fell into the hands of the gaolers, and as it contained some current gossip of a new conspiracy against the King, it got Mr Barrett into trouble. In his answers to the searching interrogations that were administered to him (February 12, 1605-6), he asserts that his letter was addressed "to one Mr Roberts, a gent, whom of some time I know about this town." The party who would be glad to have two or three words from Mr Roberts, was "a gentlewoman, by name Mrs Archer, a stranger to my acquaintance, which should have sent a matter of fortie shillings by the appointment of the aforesaid Roberts for my relief in extremity."

Barrett had referred in his letter to the kindness of a certain Sir A., who had also informed Mrs Archer that Roberts had confessed to him that he was a P[riest], and this Sir A., he now declares to be Sir Anthony Ashley, though he protests that he had no knowledge (beyond Mrs Archer's statement) that Dom Roberts really was a priest.

This is almost the only glimpse we get of our Benedictine during the weary imprisonment which followed on his apprehension in Mrs Percy's house. It is pleasant to find him befriending his poor fellow-prisoners, and forgetting his own sufferings in works of charity. The fact that he was a close prisoner shows how great those sufferings must have been. There still exists ■ pathetic account of the

cruelty shown to his Catholic prisoners by the keeper of this very place.* One of these confessors was kept "close prisoner fourteen days in heavy bolts of iron; some part thereof without fire, bed, or candle. Another fellow-prisoner of Dom Roberts, a gentleman named Thomas Newton, was eight years in this prison, and had fallen into the direst poverty: he was often most cruelly beaten by ruffians hired by the keeper, so that his arm was twice broken and he sustained a grievous rupture. He was laden with chains which bound his neck and feet together, and was thrust into the lowest dungeon, all because he could not pay the extortionate demands of the keeper. In the end he nearly died of cold and hunger, joined to his wounds, nor would the inhuman gaoler allow him any assistance." This is only a specimen of the infamous conduct of this gaoler, whose name seems to have been Barnard. As to what is meant by being "a close prisoner" under him, we find in the same paper the following description: "*in arctâ ut vocant custodia, id est ut nullus ad eum accedere vel alloqui possit, nec ipse ad aliquem.*"† Although this keeper received from the King £60 a year for one of his prisoners' food and clothing, yet, nevertheless, he deprived him of necessary clothing and food, and said he could eat the straw of his bed if he wanted more.

This was the wretch to whose tender mercies our martyr was consigned by Archbishop Bancroft and the Privy Council. What those seven weary months spent in the Gatehouse must have been to him, is easier to imagine than describe.

* Dom James I. xli. No. 102 (February 23, 1611). It is written by a prisoner named James Conway.

† "In close imprisonment, as they call it, so that none can go to him or speak to him, nor he to any one."

The very position of the prison added a strange pathos to his confinement. The Gatehouse Prison was, in fact, within the precincts of the Abbey of Westminster, and was near the west end of the Abbey Church, in what is now Dean's Yard. Here, then, on the very spot where his fathers and brethren in St Benedict were wont to serve God in one of the noblest houses that Christian piety ever raised, this holy monk lay in chains, suffering barbarous ill-treatment for that faith which, though now denied by the clergy of Westminster, was witnessed to by every stone of the ancient Abbey.

And it was not long before the last of the monks of Westminster came to join his young brother in the same cruel bonds. Dom Sigebert Buckley was eighty-eight years of age when, in the popular excitement caused by the discovery of the Powder Plot, he was thrown again into prison. A professed monk of Westminster under the Venerable Abbot Feckenham, he had ever held steadfast to the faith, and had spent already four-and-forty years in chains. He was now one of the very few survivors of the ancient English Congregation of the Order, and he was thus preserved by Divine Providence in order to become the link between the old and the new, the chosen instrument in handing down to future generations the sacred privileges and the venerable traditions of the makers of Christian England.

Dom Roberts' captivity seems to have become somewhat lighter as the weary months dragged on. He, therefore, probably had access to his fellow-monk, and he seems to have shared the cell of another future martyr, the Venerable Thomas Garnet. At any rate, he was in constant communication with this noble-hearted young priest, who had to pay so heavy a price for being the nephew and name-

sake of the famous Jesuit.* His friends, no doubt, managed in time to get access to him, and by bribes to the keeper, who was as avaricious as cruel, contrived to relax the stricter conditions of his captivity. We do not think it would be fanciful to ascribe this change in great part to the efforts of the noble Spanish lady, Donna Luisa de Carvajal, who afterwards became so close a friend of our Benedictine. She arrived in England in May 1606,† and found her way at once to the prisons, for her chief thought (after the desire for martyrdom) in coming there was to be able to minister to the confessors of Christ. As we have seen, she had probably known Dom Roberts in Spain, but, in any case, she would naturally be interested in one who could speak to her in her own beautiful Spanish tongue, and who had lived so long among her countrymen. Our martyr was not slow to profit by the slight relaxation of his bonds; his one aim was to win souls to Christ, and even in prison he was not idle. It was in the spring of this year that he received into the Church a young man who afterwards became a priest and a Jesuit.‡ Francis Miles, son of Ralph Miles and Maria Armstrong, was about sixteen at the time. His mother was of a good Nottinghamshire family. He was brought up in the Diocese of Chichester, though a Londoner by birth. He had been reconciled at the age of fourteen by a Priest in the Clink prison, but had relapsed for a time, owing to the violent opposition of his family. However, Dom Roberts managed to win him back to God, and received his young penitent again into the Church, in his cell in the Gate-

* Foley, ii. pp. 479-481.

† Life cited above, p. 180.

‡ Foley, "Pilgrim-book of the English College at Rome," p. 267. See, too, "Records, S.J.," I. p. 468. Miles says: "in the Lent of 1607," but he is evidently making a slip, as Dom Roberts was abroad during the first nine months of this year.

house Prison. Nor did he ever afterwards fall away, but became a zealous labourer in the English vineyard, where he died in 1650. Here is his simple statement, made at Rome in 1613:—

“I always lived until my fourteenth year with Protestants. I then had a conversation with a certain Catholic youth, very dear to me, upon the subject of religion, by whose pious persuasion I was conducted to the Clink prison, London, and was there reconciled to the Church, but I forget the name of the priest. When this became known to my mother and elder brother, they took my Catholic books from me and threw them into the fire; and at the same time, on account of the plague that raged in London, I was sent into Kent, and there, by the insidious persuasions of the heretics, I frequented their temples. I remained in that state for two or three years, but when I came to more mature age I again recalled to mind the Catholic faith. But my Catholic friend, by whom I had been converted, being dead, I had none to look to save God alone, the Helper of all who trust in Him, and I earnestly implored Him to lead me to the knowledge of the true faith. Nor were my prayers in vain, for shortly afterwards I contracted a friendship with a certain gentleman, named William Courte, and a nephew of Father Stanney. He took me to a prison, to Father Roberts, a monk, and now a glorious martyr, by whom I was reconciled in 1607, as I think, and in the time of Lent. From this time, in spite of the threats and blandishments of my friends, I have persevered in the Catholic faith. Praise be to God!” He adds that he was “always deeply attached to” our martyr, “on account of his charity and kindness,” and because he was again restored to the Faith by his efforts and persuasion.

We shall find Francis Miles in the company of his

spiritual father later on in our history. But we must now pass on to that father's banishment, which took place at the end of July 1606.

The discovery of the Gunpowder Plot had, of course, added fresh fuel to the fanatical hatred of Catholics, which consumed the Parliament. New laws of an even more oppressive and vexatious character than the old ones were immediately devised by their ingenious cruelty. By one of these it was enacted that attendance at the Protestant Church was not enough to prove one's loyalty; it was also necessary to receive the Lord's Supper at least once a year. The King might, if he pleased, in place of the usual fines for recusancy, seize the whole of the personal and two-thirds of the real estate of the offender. Any Catholic who kept in his house a visitor or servant who did not attend Church, was liable to a penalty of ten pounds a month.*

But the other Bill passed at this time "exceeded in cruelty all that had hitherto been devised. It pursued the faithful Catholic from the cradle to the grave." He could not live within ten miles of London, nor travel a distance of more than five miles from his home without special license signed by four justices.† He could not practise as a lawyer, physician, or apothecary, or serve in the army or navy, or hold any commission or place of trust in the commonwealth. A Catholic lady, even if married to a Protestant, forfeited two-thirds of her dower and of her jointure, and could inherit nothing from her

* De la Boderie, the French Ambassador, remarks that this last law pressed hardly even on the Protestants, who kept Catholic servants because they found them more faithful than those of their own religion. "*Il y eut, he continues, "l'autre jour un seul seigneur, qui donna congé à soixante. J'en scais autres de très bonne qualité, qui sont résolus de souffrir tout, plutôt que de congédier les leurs."*—Tierney-Dodd, iv. p. 67.

† One such licence is still preserved in the Library of Oscott College.

husband. If children were not baptised by the Protestant minister, their parents were fined £100 for each omission, nor could a Catholic be buried elsewhere than in the Protestant churchyard. All Catholics, whether children or adults, going beyond the seas without special license from the King and Council, lost all their rights to any property or inheritance, all which passed to the nearest Protestant heir. To crown all, any Catholic convicted of recusancy was declared excommunicated, and consequently disabled from maintaining or defending any personal action or suit; his house might be searched at any time, his books and furniture carried off and burnt, and his arms and ammunition taken from him, and kept at his expense by the magistrates.

These Bills received the royal assent in spite of the intercession of the French Ambassador, on May 27, 1606. On July 10, a proclamation was issued, commanding all Jesuits and other priests to depart the realm.* The King, in this edict, greatly plumes himself on his mercy and moderation. He purposes to expel the priests lest they should give him fresh cause for severity by their "vile and barbarous provocations." "We do purpose to send away, out of our realm, even those of that condition whose lives are in our hands to take every hour, if we were so disposed." All priests are to depart before the first of August "upon pain to incur the utmost danger of our laws." "And now," he concludes, "lest happily this unexpected course of our so often-times reiterated clemency, after such an example, should either serve to encourage the priests themselves to affront our justice, or discourage those good and dear subjects of ours, whose danger and destruction we know

* Tierney-Dodd, iv. p. cxxxii,

shall never be severed from our own, whensoever such projects shall be in motion, we do hereto protest that this is done for no other purpose but to avoid the effusion of blood, and by banishing them presently out of our dominions, to remove all cause of such severity as we shall be otherwise constrained to use towards the other sort of our people, as long as those seducers shall have opportunity to betray their conscience and corrupt their loyalty; towards whom our affections do vary with the object; as we confess that we desire still to make it appear in the whole course of our government, *we are far from accounting all those subjects disloyal that are that way affected*; and that we do distinguish of such as be carried only of blind zeal, and such as sin out of presumption, and, under pretext of zeal, make it their only object to persuade disobedience, and to practise the ruin of this Church and commonwealth."

Of course James knew very well that the vast majority of the priests, whom he termed "seducers," were as loyal as any of his subjects, but it suited his purpose to distinguish between them and a portion of their flock.

Dom Roberts, it seems, would not have been included in this sentence of transportation had it not been for "the means and intercession of some great personage in this land." * The French Life informs us that this personage was De la Boderie, the Ambassador, who had a long interview with the King on the Feast of St Augustine of Canterbury (May 26), and while he failed in the main object of his pleading, gained at least this favour. Whether, however, Dom Roberts regarded it as a favour may well be doubted.

His companions in exile numbered forty-seven priests

* "Running Register," p. 90.

and two laymen, and among them were at least four future martyrs, including his old fellow-prisoner, Father Thomas Garnet, and the future Benedictine martyr, Dom George Gervase. Father Stanney, the Jesuit, whose nephew brought Miles to Dom Roberts, was also transported from the Gatehouse prison, which probably explains how the young man came to make our Benedictine's acquaintance.

We shall see that the zealous monk was by no means idle during his enforced absence from the mission-field.

CHAPTER X.

DOUAY.

DOM ROBERTS' own account of the way he spent his exile is very brief. In his examination before the Bishop of London, in December 1607, he says "that during this his second being beyond seas he was at Douay, Paris, Valladolid, Salamanca, St James in Galicia, and returned through France and staid in Paris and Douay, whence he came again into England about the beginning of October last" (*i.e.* 1607). He was therefore absent about fourteen months from the mission-field. How did he employ himself during this period of exile? Lewis Owen gives us some valuable help towards answering this question.

"Who having landed in *Dunkerke*," he says, "with all speed possible took his journey for Spaine; where hee was entertained as a *Santico* (a little Saint), because he had been so constant for the Catholike religion. Being thus applauded and extolled by the Spaniards and his owne countrymen he procured diuers letters from the Generall Provincials, and others, the chieftest of the Spanish Abbots of Saint *Bennet's* Order to the Abbots of the Lowe Countreys for the maintenance of a Congregation of English Monks in the University of *Doway*, signifying unto them what they had done and still did for them in *Spaine*, and what a meritorious deed it was, to helpe

their owne spiritual brethren in so good a worke, as was the conversion of a whole Kingdom from Heresie to their holy mother, the Church of *Rome*, and that the English Monks (yea, all English Catholikes) would not be unthankful unto them or their successors for their charitie. Father *Roberts* hauing received these and many other letters to the purpose, together with a good *Viaticum* to defray his charges) with all speed took his leave of *Spaine*, and came (together with another English Monke whose name was Father *White*, alias *Augustin*) into *Flanders*, where he sollicitated his businesse so well, that all the Abbots in the Low-Countries were content to contribute toward such a good work. For some of them promised to give him Corne, and others money. Whereupon immediately hee hired a convenient house neere St Iames Church in *Doway* and accommodated a lower room for a Chapell to say Masse, and gathered ten or twelue other English monks unto him whereof hee was the *Prior*."

But we must go back a little in our narrative to understand all this better. With the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot there burst, as we have seen, such a furious tempest of persecution against the Catholics, that many priests found it necessary to retire for a while from England. Among these were some of our Benedictines who joined Dom Augustine Bradshaw at Douay, whither he had safely found his way a little before. But as in many past instances, even from Apostolic times, this persecution resulted in a greater good for the hunted religious. Dom Augustine, seeing by experience the impossibility of establishing any sort of religious house in England, determined to set about doing what he could to found a monastery in Flanders, which might serve at once as a seminary for the mission and a house of regular observance for the monks themselves. As

Weldon puts it,* "fearing the violent cruelties in force would soon bereave his mission of a continued succession, unless they could procure some refuge both to shelter themselves in when such violent storms broke out, and a nursery for the education of such as the spirit of God should dispose to such a vocation, for both which purposes Spain was too remote, he went to Douay where he obtained a dormitory in Anchin College.

"Thither he called some of the English Fathers of that Congregation who were intended and designed immediately for England. He gave order likewise to such of his Obedience that were there already to send over some youths to be educated in this new obtained place."

This then was the beginning of the famous Monastery of St Gregory's, Douay, now flourishing at Downside, near Bath. The credit of the foundation belongs to Dom Augustine and not to our hero; though the part the latter took in consolidating and developing the work has been entirely overlooked by Weldon and other writers.

Dom Augustine was brought over from England by Thomas, Count Arundel of Wardour, the hero of the siege of Gran, whose very name, we are told, struck terror into the Turks.† This famous warrior was Colonel of the English regiment, serving under the Archduke in Flanders, and he made Dom Augustine Chaplain-Major to his soldiers. The appointment, however, caused a good deal of jealousy, and some of the Benedictines' opponents even accused him of being in the pay of the English Government. However, with the help of Count Arundel,

* "Chronological Notes," p. 62. Weldon is inaccurate as ever in this account. Dom Augustine left England *before* the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot (about September 10, 1605), instead of after it, as he says.

† Oliver, "Collections Illustrating the History of the Catholic Religion in the West of England" (London, Dolman, 1857), p. 77.

he had no difficulty in rebutting these charges.* His zeal, as we have seen, was not content with ministering to the regiment, and he yearned to found a permanent home for his brethren in hospitable Flanders.

For a year or so he had to be content with the rooms in Anchin College, which he obtained from the Abbot of Anchin. This College was one of the establishments which the Flemish Benedictines had established in the University of Douay for the benefit of their young monks who studied there. About the same time he got acquainted with Mr Arthur Pitts, a Canon of Remiremont, and began negotiations with him, which eventually resulted in obtaining the gift of the old Collegiate Church of St Lawrence, at Dieulwart or Dieulouard, in Lorraine. But to enter into this matter would take us too far from our subject.

Thus Dom Augustine was busily employed in Flanders while Dom John Roberts was working for the same cause in Spain. At last the latter returned to Douay, and things at once began to make good progress.

His reception in Spain had been most cordial, and his recommendations to the Flemish Abbots were exceedingly valuable to the struggling community.

The house "near St James' Church" was one belonging to the Trinitarians, and was situated close to the present railway station. Here the little community "kept choir and received novices, living very sparingly on the stipends they received for teaching in the Benedictine Colleges

* See Westminster Archives, viii. p. 479, No. 99. "Count Arundel of Wardour," had come over "against the King's command, under the protection, though without the knowledge, of the Spanish Ambassador." Already, by September 12, Cecil sent him an order, that by the end of the campaign he was to return and present himself before the Council. The Archduke petitioned for his pardon, however, and this was granted.

of Anchin and Marciennes, with occasional help from Spain."*

Owen is the only authority we have found for making Dom John Roberts first Prior of St Gregory's, and we should have been disposed to doubt his statement, were it not that a recent semi-official document, emanating from St Gregory's itself, places him at the head of its list of Priors.†

Owen is certainly wrong, however, in making Dom Augustine the companion of our martyr in his journey to Spain, for we can trace the former's movements through the whole of 1606, and the greater part of the next year.‡ It must have been indeed a joy to the valiant confessor of Christ to see a new English home of St Benedict springing up—on a foreign soil it is true—but none the less a real though humble revival of the past glories of Canterbury, Westminster, and St Albans. Nor did the test of all true work for Christ fail to come speedily enough: opposition and persecution were to try the new foundation as in a furnace, and the persecutions of the heretic and unbeliever

* See *Douai Magazine* (No. 6, September 1895, p. 312), "Alma Mater," by the Right Rev. D. Austin O'Neill, Bishop of Port Louis, late President-General of the Anglo-Benedictine Congregation.

† See *Downside Review*, "Series Priorum Sti. Gregorii" (vol. xv. March 1896, p. 69). The writer's authority is sufficiently great to make us accept the matter as proved, although there is certainly a mistake in the dates given as those of his term of Priorship, 1605-1606, for Dom Roberts was, as we have seen, in prison from November 1605 to July 1606, and could not have returned from his visit from Spain much before the winter of 1606. We add the description of his relations with St Gregory's: "*A patria pulsus propter fidem, vir magni animi et zeli indefessi fundamenta jecit hujus domus S. Gregorii in maxima paupertate et in aerumnis multis in civitate Duaco in Belgio. Eam aliquanto tempore rexit, semper tutatus est.*" It should be added that the document only professes to be an attempt to make a complete series of the Priors.

‡ From his letters preserved in the Westminster Archives, etc., Dom Augustine's only possible time for a journey to Spain would be from August 7, 1607 to February 1608, and October 1608 to April 1609. Dom John could not have been with him at either time, for he returned to England in October 1607.

must have seemed to our hero light and sweet in comparison with the sorrow of finding his work thwarted and opposed at every step, by Catholics, priests, yes, and even religious, exiles like himself for the cause of Christ. But we do not intend to enter into the details of the weary conflicts which had to be endured before St Gregory's Priory was safely and firmly founded.

It will surprise and scandalise no one who is in any degree a student of Church history, to find that the work of the English monks was bitterly opposed by good and holy men. The lives of the Saints show us a thousand examples of this kind, God permitting His servants thus to suffer from what is in truth the hardest trial of all. The best of men are apt to look at things from only one point of view, and the more zealous they are for the good works they are engaged on, the more short-sighted are they (too often at least) as to the effects and character of the work of others. Thus we are not surprised to find that many English Catholics, and among them notably some members of the Society of Jesus, strongly objected to the establishment of the Benedictines at Douay. We may briefly summarise their objections from a paper drawn up by Father Persons for the information of the Roman Curia.* In the first place, it is said that the monks had been very troublesome while they were in the Seminary of Valladolid, and had greatly disturbed the order and peace of that institution: it was therefore only right that they should not be allowed to settle close to the great Seminary of Douay. Secondly, they were friends of the English Government, and it was a certain fact that their Superior had obtained the post of Chaplain-General in the Catholic camp, owing to the interest of the English Council. He

* Westminster Archives, viii. p. 87, anno 1606.

was even suspected to have had dealings with the Earl of Salisbury, and with the English Ambassador, at Brussels. Others of them had stirred up feeling against the Seminaries, and, in particular, they were known to be very friendly to Dr Gifford,* for many years well known to be a disturber of the public peace. Again they received and made much of any refractory students who were turned out of the Seminaries. In a word, they were a real danger to the peace and well-being of these institutions.

Now, of course, it is evident that the authorities of the Seminaries would be anxious that their best young men should not be induced to leave them, to embrace the religious habit, and no one can blame them if they tried to avert such a danger. The Jesuits were at this time the real (though not the nominal) rulers of the Douay Seminary, and had charge of all the others, except that of Lisbon: they were thus prominent in the controversy. Nevertheless, it is to be feared that there was not a little jealousy of the return of the old Order to England, for it was well known that the Benedictines were regarded with peculiar affection in the island.

This jealousy led to some regrettable steps on the part of their opponents, which really seem to have exceeded the limits of a just and prudent care for the interests entrusted to them; but into the details of which we shall not enter. The charges detailed above were very fully refuted by the Benedictines, as any one can see who consults their Memorial, drawn up and presented to the Pope by Dom Anselm Beech of Manchester, their Procurator at the Roman Court.†

* He soon became a Benedictine, under the title of Dom Gabriel a Sancta Maria, and was professed for Dieulwart. He afterwards was raised to the Archiepiscopal See of Rheims.

† Tierney-Dodd, iv. p. cexiii. It is right to say that the Papal Nuncio

The little Community over which Dom John Roberts presided, consisted, according to Weldon, of but five monks with a lay-brother.* The latter received the habit in this house, Brother Peter Huitson of Ashburne, in Derbyshire. Among the monks was D. Nicholas Becket, professed at the Monastery of San Salvador, Onia, who succeeded Dom Roberts as Prior in 1607. Two novices at least presented themselves during our Prior's term of office: the one was a Lancashire man, Dom Joseph a Sancta Maria Haworth (who was, however, professed for Dieulwart), the other a Somersetshire priest, Dom Nicholas Fitzjames of Redlinch.

And now we come to the great turn in the fortunes of the humble Priory, through the benefaction of Abbot Cavarel of St Vaast's Abbey at Arras. The story has been so often told that we will content ourselves with recounting it as briefly as possible. Here is Owen's version of it: "The *Abbot of Arras* (who is a man of great reuenues, and a great fauourite of our English fugitiues; and one (as they say, that is a good man to all poore men), admiring at the forwardnesse and zeale of this English Prior [*i.e.* of Dom John Roberts], promised to build a Cloister at his owne proper cost and charges for the English Monks in *Doway*, and to giue them some yeerely pension besides; if that theye could procure leaue from the King of *Spaine*, the *Archduke* and the *Archduchesse*. But (alas!) the English Iesuites (perceiving which way the cry went) made all the friends they could to prevent the Monks in their proceedings."

"On the other side, Dr *Gifford*, who was then Dean of

in Flanders, who was appointed to enquire into the matter, assured Dom Augustine that it was not true that the Jesuits were at the bottom of the opposition made to him.

* This is Weldon's account, but it is untrustworthy. The names he gives are incorrect, and he does not mention Dom Leander, who *was* there,

the Collegiate Church of *St Peter* in *Rissell* (*alias Insula*)* a Citie in the confines of *Flanders*, and the other Doctors and secular Priests above mentioned, tooke the Monks' part, and much adoe there was about the matter in the Court of *Brussels*; but in the end the Iesuites prevailed, and Dr *Gifford* was banished out of the *Archduke* and *Archduchesse* Dominions:† howbeit he was permitted to make the best of all his spirituall livings in the *Low-Countries*, and to depart within a very short time. . . . Father *Roberts* hauing occasion of businesse to visit his friends in *England*, sends Father *Augustin* ‡ with Letters into *Spaine* to the *Abbots* and *Monks*, to certifie them of his whole proceedings in the *Low-Countries*, and how hee was opposed by the Iesuites; which made the *Abbots* and *Monks* to sweare many a *Boto a Dios* that the Iesuites (who were *Vpstarts*, and *los mas novicios de todos los Religiosos*; 'the inferiour Order of all the Religious Orders') should not dominiere ouer them, who were of the first Order of Monks that euer was; and so, with great indignation, they went unto the king, and with open mouths exclaimed against the English Iesuites, for hindering so good a work."

"Father *Creswell* and the rest of the Iesuites that liued in the Court of *Spaine*, together with their brethren the Spanish Iesuites, stood stoutly to their tacklings, alledging, that the Monks would doe more hurt than good, in the conuersion of *England*; because that they were (for the most part) unlearned, idle, lazie fellowes, and withall men of no account in *England*, and a thousand other such accusations; insomuch that all the principallest men in

* Lille.

† He had been appointed Dean of the Collegiate Church of Notre Dame, May 6, 1595. He was exiled at very short notice, in July 1606, and retired to Rheims. See *Downside Review*, xvi. p. 33.

‡ If this is correct, it must have been, as we have seen, in the autumn or winter of 1607.

the Court were *pro et contra*, some with the *Benedictins* and others with the *Iesuites*, and therefore to pacifie this uproar, the king wrote to the Pope to know his pleasure; but his Holinesse kept them in Law in *Rome* and in *Spaine* for some two yeeres.”*

Such a story was delightful to a man like Owen, but it is sad indeed to Catholic hearts; for, though coarsely told, the facts are correct enough, and are amply borne out by the documents in the Westminster and other Archives. Still, we are consoled by thinking that though much harm was done by these disputes, much time, energy, and money wasted, which had better been spent on our Lord's vineyard, yet God brought good out of the evil, and the Benedictine family, now being slowly gathered together among the ruins of religion, was only strengthened and purified by the trial. Later on, too, we shall find Father Persons, and other Jesuit Fathers, paying loving homage and veneration to the memory of the great martyr, whose life-work they were now striving to thwart, from motives mistaken indeed, but doubtless conscientious and sincere.†

But amidst all these anxieties, the heart of the heroic Prior yearned after the sheep he had left in England,

* “Running Register,” p. 92. The decision of Paul V. appeared December 10, 1608. See Appendix H.

† We have not attempted to enter fully into the stirring history of the foundation of St Gregory's, or to unravel the hopelessly confused and self-contradictory account which the worthy Weldon gives of it. In the *Downside Review* for April 1897, will be found an admirable criticism of Weldon's methods, from the competent pen of Mr Edmund Bishop. Weldon is, in fact, utterly untrustworthy (though here and there a fact gleams out from his obscurity); and as he is almost the only authority we have to go by, the true story must be left to those who have access to the documents, and the patience and skill necessary to gather together the threads of a very tangled story.

From Mr Bishop's valuable Article we learn that Fr. Augustine started the work at Douay, at the end of November 1605. In 1606 the Archduke and the Nuncio Decio Caraffa recommended him and his companions to Abbot Cavarel. The officers of the English regiment were cashiered May 28, 1606, so Dom Augustine (who was Chaplain-Major) returned to

exposed as they were, without a shepherd, to all the fury of the persecutor. This was the "business" which drew him out of his peaceful cloister, back to the perils and fatigues of missionary life. His house was prospering, and had found powerful protectors, and though its position was still critical, he could trust its fortunes to the prudence and zeal of Dom Augustine. And so in October 1607 he found his way once more to England. Owen says, in his characteristic fashion, that he spent his time "in conuerting or rather courting of Ladies and Gentlewomen (with whom he was very intimate and highly fauoured)," which is only, after all, a way of expressing his zealous labours in the ministry. But his ever watchful foes soon found out that he was again at work amongst them, and on December 27, he was apprehended "by Humphrey Crosse, one of Her Majesty's sworn messengers, over against St Dunstan's, in Fleet Street." He was again committed to the Gatehouse prison, "together with the glorious martyr, Father Thomas Garnet," and on December 21, had to endure an examination "before the Reverend Father the Lord

Douay in the summer of that year. They left the dormitory in Anchin College, and entered the house belonging to the Trinitarians, May 12, 1607, and on this date Dom Nicholas Fitzjames was clothed. Dom Augustine was, however, counselled to leave Douay by the Nuncio Caraffa, just before he returned to Rome (June 1607), on account of the opposition of the Jesuits. On October 12, 1607, the *Echevins* of Douay gave the Fathers a certificate or testimonial. The Archduke seems to have interested himself greatly in the Foundation, and encouraged Abbot Cavarel to build the new Monastery. Perpetual Masses for him and the Archduchess Isabella "seem to have been a condition attached to the permission to build and found." The spring of 1608 was spent by Dom Augustine at Douay; in July he was at Rheims, but was again at Douay in October. The Nuncio Guido Bentivoglio, Archbishop of Rhodes, made a Visitation there in May 1609, as he writes to Cardinal Borghese "to compose the differences between the English Seminary there and the English Benedictines, exhorting them both to observe the rules of conduct drawn up by the Pope. . . . The Prior of the Benedictines was absent, but he saw their Vicar."—"Papers, Paul V.," Record Office.

Bishop of London, Sir Edward Stanhope, Mr Dr Ferrand, and Mr Kempe."

This examination has fortunately been preserved (though it has escaped the notice of previous writers), and to it we owe many precious details of the life of our martyr.* He confessed to being a Benedictine, but refused to answer the fatal question as to whether he had taken Orders beyond the seas, "because he thinketh it prejudicial unto him," so he left it to his accusers to prove.

"Being demanded why he presumed to return into England without the king's license?—He saith that he knoweth the king to be merciful, and himself loyally affected to his Majesty, and therefore could not fear that so gracious a prince would do him any hurt."

"Being asked whether he did not know that his return was against the laws?—He saith that many men do know much which they do not apply to their own particulars, but he knoweth it was against law for him to return into England."

"Being demanded whether he were sent by any manner of authority or otherwise into England?—He saith he doth not think it safe for him to answer thereunto."

"Being shown the Oath of Allegiance, 3 Jacobi, cap. 4to, and required to take the said oath to testify his loyalty before mentioned, he desireth time to consider of it, because, as far as he can see yet, he cannot take it with a safe conscience."

"Being showed a Breviarium Romanum, printed at Paris 1598, with two Latin verses written in the first pages of the white paper at the beginning thereof, he saith that it is his book, and was found about him at the time

* It is in the Archives of the Old Brotherhood of the Secular Clergy, once the English Chapter. See Appendix G,

of his apprehension, and by him delivered to the Lord Bishop of London."

The mention of the Oath of Allegiance obliges us to refer for a moment to this fruitful source of misery and discord, especially, as although Dom Roberts died rather than take it, his attitude towards it has been variously interpreted. On one occasion (apparently about this time) it would appear that some Jesuit Father in England wrote a report to Rome that our martyr had taken the Oath, and these letters, which contained other allegations against him, were ordered by Father Persons to be read aloud to the students of the English College there.*

This was during the heat of the controversy about the Benedictines, and the report was soon proved a false one, but there is another witness who must not be passed over. This is Roger Widdrington (generally understood to be an *alias* of Dom Thomas Preston, the Superior of the English Cassinese monks), who wrote several books in favour of taking the Oath. He writes thus of our martyr's position: "It is also certain that although Father Roberts did not publicly teach that the Oath was lawful, for that his Holiness by his Breves had declared the contrary, and had commanded the English priests not to teach that it might lawfully be taken, nevertheless, even until death, he persisted in this opinion that there was nothing contained in the Oath which was contrary to faith or salvation, neither would he put any scruple into the minds of his ghostly children concerning the refusing of the same. For two principal reasons (as he hath often-times acknowledged to myself and others) he was persuaded that the Oath might lawfully be taken: the first was, for that he could not perceive that those learned men who

* Westminster Archives, viii. p. 479, No. 99. The date of the information is March 1608. See Appendix I.

had written against it had hitherto sufficiently proved that it contained anything which was contrary to faith or salvation. The other was, that when he was at Paris,* he craved the opinions of two most learned divines of that nation concerning the lawfulness of the Oath, and at length, through his great entreaty, they gave him this answer: That they for their own parts had not hitherto observed in it anything which might not be taken, and that scarce any subject of the King of France, as they thought, would stagger to take the like Oath, if it were by public authority commanded under so great penalties. And that this is most true he has divers times protested to me and many others, and his own handwriting, which is kept even until this day, can, if need require, yield sufficient testimony hereof." †

We will now quote from the Oath itself, only premising that it formed part of one of those Acts of Parliament directed against the unfortunate Catholics which formed the immediate reprisals of the Government after the discovery of the Powder Plot. The Oath itself was devised, it is said, by Archbishop Bancroft, aided by a renegade Jesuit, Christopher Perkins, expressly in order to spread disunion among the Catholics. It was, however, pretended that it was the Government's answer to the declaration of loyalty made by the thirteen priests to Queen Elizabeth just before her death, and that it was a *bona-fide* attempt to distinguish between the priests and Catholics who really were loyal to authority, and the "traitorous" majority. The King in his defence of the Oath protested over and over again that he meant it to be such as any loyal Catholic might take, and to contain nothing against Catholic faith or practice. But let us examine its clauses.

* In 1607.

† From a MS. of Widdrington's, on the "Oath of Allegiance,"

This Oath declares first "that James was lawful king, and that the Pope had no kind of authority to depose him, or to authorise others to depose him, or to release his subjects from their allegiance." The person thus swearing was, moreover, to declare that he would support the King, notwithstanding any deprivation or excommunication. Finally, he was to add: "And I do further swear that I do from my heart abhor, detest, and abjure as impious and heretical, this damnable doctrine and position, that princes which be excommunicated by the Pope may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or any other whatsoever. And I do believe, and in my conscience am resolved, that neither the Pope nor any other person whatsoever, hath power to absolve me from this oath, or any part thereof, which I acknowledge by good and full authority to be lawfully ministered unto me, and do renounce all pardons and dispensations to the contrary. All these things I do plainly and sincerely acknowledge and swear according to these express words by me spoken, and according to the plain and common sense and understanding of the same words without any equivocation or mental evasion or secret reservation whatsoever." *

Such is the Oath which spread consternation and dismay everywhere among the English Catholics. Opinions were divided about the lawfulness of taking it, and the penalties of refusing it were terrible. It meant perpetual imprisonment and confiscation of lands and goods—"the danger and penalty of *premunire*," in short.

On September 22, 1606, Pope Paul V. sent a brief to the English Catholics, in which he exhorted them to patience and courage, and expressly condemned the new Oath as "containing many things which are plainly adverse

* See Flanagan, "History of the Church in England," ii. 292. The Oath is printed in full in Tierney-Dodd, iv. cxviii.

to the Faith and to salvation.”* He exhorted them, in noble and tender words, to bear their new trials with that same fortitude “which is no less resplendent in these latter times in your martyrs than it was in the first ages of the Church”—weighty words from the Vicar of Christ, and calculated indeed to console and animate his afflicted children!† The Brief, however, was suppressed by Blackwell, the Archpriest, and did not come to general knowledge for some time. Meanwhile Robert Drury, one of the priests who had signed the declaration of allegiance to Elizabeth, was taken, and tendered the oath, which he heroically refused. He expiated his refusal on the scaffold, and died a martyr for the authority of the Roman Pontiff (February 26, 1606-7). There is some reason to think, as we have seen, that he was a Benedictine confrater or oblate.

On information being conveyed to Rome that the authenticity of the breve was disputed, and that many had taken the oath, another brief was prepared and signed (August 23, 1607). It confirmed the previous document, and enjoined all Catholics to accept and abide by the previous prohibition. But when it arrived in England, Blackwell, the Archpriest, who had fallen into the hands of the Government, had not only taken the Oath, but had by a public letter recommended his flock to imitate his example. Two parties were thus formed in the afflicted Church.

Blackwell, after a controversy with Bellarmine, was finally deposed from his office (February 1, 1608).

* “*Quæ cum ita sint, satis vobis ex verbis ipsis perspicuum esse debet, quod hujusmodi juramentum, salvâ fide Catholicâ et salute animarum vestrarum, præstari non potest, cum multa contineat, quæ fidei atque salutis aperte adversantur.*”

† The Brief is printed by Tierney-Dodd, iv. cxl. Paul V. tried to get some alleviation for the Catholics by sending an envoy to James I. His agent was kindly received, and sent back with presents, but his mission was a complete failure.

Such was the state of things when John Roberts came back to England in the autumn of 1607. The question of the Oath and its lawfulness was discussed everywhere with the greatest heat, and every priest had to take one side or the other. Whatever the anonymous writer we have quoted may say as to our hero's private opinions, as we have seen, he refused the Oath when it was tendered him at his examination in December. It may be that to him (as to Ven. Robert Drury himself) the Oath did not seem altogether unlawful; but the fact that the Holy Father had forbidden it to be taken was sufficient for him, as for every loyal son of the Church.*

As to the merits or demerits of the Oath itself, we prefer to quote the opinion of another martyr, the Ven. John Gavan, of the Society of Jesus. He says it "consists of two parts, promissory and assertory." The former part is lawful, "so that any Catholic may lawfully swear that he will ever stick fast to his king, and to take his part both against diabolical rebels that shall rise against him at home, and against all foreign enemies that shall attempt anything against him, upon any pretence whatever, of heresy or schism, yea though the Pope himself should send forces against the king, or come in person against him, upon pretence to depose him as a heretic and to put a Catholic king in his place." The reason is "because it is a probable opinion that the Pope hath no power, neither direct nor indirect, to depose any temporal prince from his temporal crown or kingdom, even in the case of heresy." "The second part is assertory, and obligeth the taker of it to swear that the Pope hath no indirect power in any case to depose princes;

* It must be observed that the question as to the infallibility of the condemnation does not seem to have come up: both sides looked on it rather as a question of obedience to lawful authority than of faith. Nearly all the religious refused to take it.

may, it obliges us to swear that the contrary opinion is heretical and impious, and this part of the Oath is unlawful . . . and the reason is that by swearing this, he sweareth more than he knows, and consequently he sweareth rashly, and exposeth himself to the danger of perjury.

“. . . For although, as I have said, a great many learned and virtuous men are of opinion that the Pope hath no such power over princes, yet a great many more, as learned and virtuous divines as the former, are of the contrary opinion, and teach that in some cases the Pope hath an indirect power to depose princes. . . . And how can any one swear that opinion to be heretical, which neither holy Scripture nor the Church condemns as such, nay, which divines affirm to be true?”

The holy martyr concludes by pointing out that it is the promissory part of the Oath which really “tieth both our hearts and hands to the king’s service,” and that the assertory part is useless. And if the enemy object that the Pope could absolve them from this, he replies that they are willing to swear to the king beforehand that they will not accept any such absolution. “And what can any prince in reason exact of any subject more than this? Or what can any subject in reason offer more?” But if the king insist on the assertory part also, “then every good Catholic is bound rather to offend man than God, and rather choose to lose his life than to offend God mortally by wilfully taking a rash oath.”*

Such thoughts as these, joined of course to the supreme duty of obedience to the Pope, no doubt decided our martyr to refuse the oath of allegiance, in spite of the opinion of the Paris doctors. So he found himself once

* “*Collectio Cardwelli*,” vol. ii. p. 161. Archives de Bruxelles, printed by Foley. The paper was written in 1678.

more in his old prison of the Gatehouse, "where," says Owen, "he continued for a month and more, spending like a little prince; for he wanted no money; hee had the libertie of the house all day long, and his friends had access unto him, but at night hee was locked up in his chamber where nobody lay but himself; for he was a good guest and spared no cost, and withall liberal to his keeper, which hee knew full well to be the only way to purchase fauour in a prison-house."

The French life says that his arrest on this occasion was due to some heretic who recognised and betrayed him to the pursuivants, and that he remained some months in prison. He finally left it by escaping through the window of his cell, together with three others who were with him, one of whom appears to be his young convert Francis Miles. This young man had got into trouble through attending a Mass at Newgate on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, and was still expiating this heinous offence in the dungeons of the Gatehouse. Owen says that Dom Roberts' friends aided his escape. They "bestowed money upon him that let them in, and afterwards hee conversed privately with them in his chamber, but in the end they brought him a cord and file, and (as some say) Mercury water, and by that meanes he did with the water eate, or with his toole file the Iron barres of his Chamber-window, which was in the upper part of the house, and afterwards came downe with the cord and so escaped away, and got ouer to Doway."* It appears, however, from Miles' own account, that they remained in hiding for about a year before they ventured again to cross the channel; if indeed they crossed before the summer of 1609, which I greatly doubt.

* "Running Register," p. 93.

The records are scanty, and rather conflicting at this time, but, as far as can be made out, Dom Roberts remained in England from his coming over in October 1607, until his banishment in June 1609. He may indeed have made a short visit to Douay after his wonderful escape from prison, but Owen is the only authority who states this.

He seems to have remained very private during the time of his freedom, probably staying as chaplain in some gentleman's house, and only issuing forth at night on his errands of mercy. Many priests were compelled to lead this most trying life during the greater part of the persecution, a life which was as solitary as that of a hermit, and far more confined, the very presence of the priest being known perhaps only to the master and mistress of the house, and one faithful servant, who would bring his food by stealth to the cramped, dark, airless room where he lay hid. But, in spite of all prudent care, it was not God's will that His confessor should remain long at liberty.

On October 15, 1608, not many months after the escape, Mark Broughton was taken and sent to Newgate. He must have been already a Benedictine novice; doubtless Dom Roberts had given him the holy habit during the time they were in hiding together. To pass one's noviciate in an English dungeon was nothing uncommon in those days. He is described by the keeper of Newgate as a "Seminary priest, and a very dangerous person," and was committed by the Lord Bishop of London.* Dom Roberts

* Dom James I. 45, No. 62, "Newgate, London, xx May 1609." John Crowder (or Broughton) had been expelled from the College at Valladolid on account of his "turbulent behaviour," May 6, 1608. (He was then a priest.) However, twenty of his fellow-students (including three priests) gave him a testimonial for good character and piety, in which they ascribe his expulsion to his devotion to the Order of St Benedict. He must have come straight to England. No doubt he took the religious name of Mark in honour of the glorious martyr Ven. Mark Barkworth, in whose steps he had so closely followed. A certified copy

may have been taken with him, but of this we are not sure. We know there was a great hue and cry after him, and that Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, issued a warrant against him. He was certainly again in the Gatehouse prison for some time before May 1609. On the 15th of that month we find he was transferred to Newgate from the Gatehouse. He is described as "an obstinate Seminary priest," which shows he still remained in the same mind about taking the Oath.

He had most probably witnessed during his period of liberty the martyrdom of his old companions, the Jesuit Father Thomas Garnet, who suffered on June 23, 1608, and the Benedictine Dom George Gervase, who died a glorious death for Christ on April 11 of the same year. It was the martyrdom of the latter, who was a monk of Dom Roberts' own foundation of St Gregory's, Doway, that so excited the enthusiasm of Yepes,—and which in later times has inspired the pen of the Count de Montalembert.* It must have been with tender recollections of this young and heroic son of his house, that the Prior entered the gloomy portals of Newgate, that fatal prison which was for most priests the last stage on the journey to the Tyburn gallows. As Yepes says, death seemed very near him now. So thought his friends. We find, for instance, the new Archpriest Birkhead writing to Dr Smith, his agent at Rome: "It is thought that Mr Roberts, the Benedictine, shall go to the pot, being removed from the Gatehouse to Newgate."

But those who were thirsting for his blood were to be disappointed once again; for once more, at the intercession of La Boderie the French Ambassador (who was always on

of his testimonial is to be found in the Archives of Monte Cassino ("Miscell. Erudit.," Tom iii. f. 238). Another is in the Westminster Archives, viii. 311.

* Who has, however, fallen into the curious mistake of thinking that Ven. George Gervase was a Spaniard (*Moines d'Occident*, v.).

the look-out to do what he could for the afflicted Catholics), the confessor of Christ was sent into exile. He went abroad with Father Mark Broughton and Francis Miles, and immediately prosecuted his journey to Spain, while Father Broughton took Francis to the College at St Omer, where the poor boy found a warm welcome, and a happy, peaceful home after the varied troubles of his young life.

Father Broughton, himself, went to Douay, and there calmly pursued his noviciate, and so much progress did he make in monastic observance, that he was able to make holy profession on September 13 or 14, 1609.

This was a happy day for the small Community there; for it was the profession of their first two novices, Dom Mark himself, and Dom Columban Malone.* The two or three who had made profession before at Douay, had made them for Dieulwart, which then promised a more secure and permanent foundation, but these were the first professions made for St Gregory's. How great must have been the joy that filled the hearts of all on that Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

Meanwhile Dom Roberts was busy in Spain. Dom Augustine had founded his little house, but it was very difficult to maintain, and till a more formal authorisation could be obtained, the future of the settlement at Douay must always be doubtful. But his brother religious now came to his aid. The Abbot of St Vaast's promise encouraged him to work his utmost to get the permissions, which were the necessary condition of the promised aid.

We will borrow from Lewis Owen the account of his successful labours:—"All this while Father *Augustin*, the other Monke, was very diligent in negotiating his sute in the

* Weldon says that Dom Mark was professed on September 14, and Dom Columban on the 13th, but it seems unlikely that two professions would be made on successive days.

Court of *Spaine*, but could not bring it to any perfection, for the Iesuites were too strong for him. Whereupon Master *Roberts* with tooth and naile began to second his brother Frier *Augustin*, and within a very short time obtained leaue from Pope *Paulus Quintus*, and the King of *Spaine*, to build a Cloister for the English *Benedictin* Monks in *Doway* or in any other City or Towne in any of the King of *Spaine's* Dominions in the *Low-Countries*. The which was no sooner granted than the Abbot of Saint *Vadastus* in *Arras* (according to his promise) began to set workmen to build a Priorie for the English Monks in *Doway*, and came himselfe in person to lay the first stone of the foundation; which within the space of one yeere was thorowly finished. Moreouer he built a fine Church for them, joyning to the Cloister, and gaue them a certain yeerely stipend or revenue towards their maintenance for euer, and also procured all the other *Abbots* of the Low Countries of their Order to giue them likewise some yeerely pension to help them to liue; for the which the English Monks of this Priorie of *Doway* are bound to giue unto the Abbot of *Arras* and his successors for euer, one great Wax candle, weighing three-score pounds, upon the first day of February yeerely by way of *homage*; and also to say one Masse euey day for him, while he liueth, and after his decease for his soule (and all the soules that are in Purgatorie) for euer. They haue many other benefactors in that Countrie, and withall, they reade a Diuinitie Lecture in their Cloister, and haue many schollers which are beneficiall unto them; and many Gentlemens sonnes (who are their friends and benefactors in *England*) doe diet in their Cloister, but not in the same part where the Monks liue, but in the other side of the Cloister; for they, and all other Monks and Friers, will not have any Secular man to know their priuate knauery. Moreouer they haue great sums of money yeerely out of *England* from the

English Popish Recusants, that are their benefactors and fauourites, which the other Monks that lurke heere and there in *England*, doe collect and transport ouer vnto them. They receiue every yeere ten or twelue young Students into their Order, and send as many Monks, when they are made Priests into *England* . . . to peruert and infect the Commonwealth with their idolatrie, superstition and fopperie; and are little lesse dangerous than the Iesuites themselues, if all circumstances bee duly considered: for they challenge and aime at, as high, or rather an higher prerogatiue, then any other of the Romane Locusts.”*

We have let Owen finish his description of the foundation of St Gregory's, although Dom Roberts, alas! never lived to see this fair consummation of his hopes and crown of his labours. The Community of St Gregory's did not take possession of their new home till some months after his martyrdom (in 1611), and it seems that our hero left at once after he had seen things put on a satisfactory footing at Douay. Owen says that no sooner had he got the grant to found the monastery, than he returned again to England. And this was to be his last journey. The little Community, still struggling with many difficulties, were to see their beloved father no more. The next time they gazed upon his form, they would see but the ghastly and mutilated members that had been hacked asunder by the hangman's knife—frightful to look upon indeed, yet glorious with the aureole of martyrdom, a treasure to them incomparably more precious than all that the holy Prior had won for them by his prudence and zeal, and untiring labours in this world.

* “Running Register,” p. 97.

CHAPTER XI.

CAPTURE, TRIAL, AND CONDEMNATION.

WE know very little of Dom John Roberts' labours during the time which elapsed between his return and his last arrest. All we know is that he showed his old heroic courage and charity in ministering to the victims of the plague, which was malignant and devastating as ever during the summer of 1610. As we have seen, all the martyr's biographers speak in the warmest terms of his heroism in the performance of this duty; it is one of the most splendid jewels in his celestial crown.*

The year 1609 had been a singular exception to all that had passed since 1580, in that not a single martyr had then shed his blood for the Faith. But this unwonted clemency had roused the anger of Parliament, and one of the first cries on its assembling, in May 1610, was for measures of increased severity against the Catholics. On June 2, in accordance with the united prayer of both Houses, a proclamation was issued against priests, Jesuits, and recusants. It enjoined all Catholics to quit London

* In December 1610, a form for the weekly return of the christening and burials in 121 London parishes was printed. It is significant that a column is provided for the names of *those who have died of the plague*. No wonder that Londoners were forbidden by royal proclamation to resort to the Court. In 1608 the meeting of Parliament was postponed, from September to February, on account of the plague.

before the last day of the month; ordered whatever arms or ammunition they might possess to be taken from them; commanded all priests to leave the kingdom within four weeks, and finally, required the bishops, justices, and other officers to be diligent in tendering the oath to all persons within their jurisdiction. It was also enacted that all persons above eighteen years of age were to take the oath within six months after the close of the present session, and the refusal involved all the penalties of *premunire*. Women recusants were to be imprisoned till they should conform and receive the sacrament in the church, unless their husbands were able to purchase their liberty by a monthly payment of £10 to the Government.*

No wonder the Archpriest wrote that "if matters proceed in execution as the Parliament hath defined, there will be no means for a Catholic to live in this realm."†

In July we learn from the same writer that "the Superior of the Benedictines" had been arrested and brought before the pseudo-bishop of London: and that there he had refused to take the oath, and was condemned to suffer the penalty. In another letter (of the same month) we are told that it was thought likely he would be put to death. But it is not certain that this refers to our martyr. Perhaps Dom Augustine Smith, Superior of the Cassinese, may be intended. If it be really Dom Roberts, it is the only notice that we have found of this arrest, and he must soon have again escaped.‡

* The proclamation is printed in Tierney-Dodd, iv. clxxxiv. The act is Stat. 7, Jac. I. c. 6.

† Tierney-Dodd, iv. 77.

‡ It is very probable, however, that it was really he, from the remarks of Bishop Abbot at the trial, and other indications in contemporary works.

However this may be, the moment for the consummation of his sacrifice was rapidly approaching. On December 2, which was the first Sunday of Advent that year, Dom John went to a Catholic house to say holy Mass. He had been "less than a year" in England, according to Owen: his last Advent Sunday had therefore been spent in peaceful retirement among his brethren at Douay. We do not know the house that was chosen for this last sacrifice, but it was probably the house in Holborn, at the corner of Chancery Lane, which seems to have served as a centre for the Benedictines in London, and so we find there were no less than five priests present at this memorable Mass.

It was, indeed, a fitting day for a martyr's last Mass. Never surely were the *sortes liturgicæ* more striking. The Introit, with its note of calm confidence in the midst of persecution: *Ad te levavi animam meam, Deus meus, in te confido, non erubescam: neque irrideant me inimici mei*;* the Epistle, with its striking and solemn warning: *Nunc enim propior est nostra salus quam cum credidimus. Nox præcessit, dies autem appropinquavit*;† the Gospel of the Last Judgment, when at last human injustice shall be reversed, and each man receive according to his works; the Offertory, taking up once more the humble and confident cry of the Introit. In short, not a word of the holy Liturgy, which had not its solemn meaning, and which did not sink profoundly into the hearts of those faithful men, assembled there to celebrate the divine Oblation, proscribed and blasphemed by their apostate countrymen.

* "To Thee, O Lord, have I lifted up my soul. In Thee, O my God, I put my trust; let me not be put to shame, neither let mine enemies laugh me to scorn."

† "For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is past and the day is at hand."

A last prayer "*contra persecutores Ecclesie*,"* and the holy Sacrifice drew to its close, while the priest called down the divine blessing upon his flock. He was about to recite the Gospel of St John, when, all of a sudden, furious blows were heard resounding at the house door. Scarcely had the martyr left the altar when cries and shouts of joy from below proved that the enemy had forced an entry. There was no time to take off the sacred vestments. With pale faces and trembling hands they hid the altar and its furniture, the lights were extinguished, and they strove to obliterate every trace of the sacrifice that was scarcely ended. The six priests were hastily pushed into a cellar underground, our martyr still clad in the sacred vestments. "And those wicked servants of Satan," pursues the French biographer, "not leaving a hole or corner of the house unvisited, came at last on the hiding-place of these devout priests, among whom the Reverend Father John was seized and dragged to prison." Thus discovered and dragged through the streets in those sacred vestments, once so venerated in England, but now unknown, or hated and despised, our martyr was thrown into Newgate. To get an idea of the violence which the fanaticism of the mob must have made him suffer during this *Via dolorosa*, it will be sufficient to recall that Father Bullaker, the Franciscan martyr, who was also taken at the altar, received permission to unvest before he was carried away, simply because there was reason to fear that when in the street, the pursuivants

* *Quæsumus Domine Deus noster : ut quos divina tribuis participatione gaudere, humanis non sinas subjacere periculis. Per—* (Post-communio ex Missali Romano).

"*Against the Persecutors of the Church.*"

"We beseech Thee, O Almighty God, not to leave exposed to the dangers of human life, those whom Thou hast permitted to partake of these divine mysteries. Through—" (Post-communion).

as well as their captive would be torn to pieces by the infuriated mob, excited to frenzy by the sight of the priestly vestments.

Three days later, on Wednesday, December 5, Dom Roberts appeared on his trial, in company with Mr Thomas Somers (or Wilson), a secular priest, who had probably been arrested among the company on Sunday.

There are several accounts of the trial extant. We have preferred to follow that printed by Father Pollen, from the Stoneyhurst MSS.* It is the account of one who was present in court, and is the fullest and most detailed of all. It is admirably corroborated by the French life, which rests on even greater authority—that of the martyr himself.† This is, however, the translation of a Latin trans-

* "Acts of the English Martyrs," p. 145.

† Dom Augustine Bradshaw attests this in the following terms:—
"Nous, Fr. Augustin de Saint-Jean, prieur et Vicaire Général des moines Anglois de'decà les monts, de la Congrégation de St Benoist en Espagne, tesmoignons que la susdite manière tenue et passée en l'examen et jugement du R. P. Jean de Mervinia est trāslatée fidèlement de l'Anglois en Latin, jouxte l'exemplaire qu'iceluy mesme B. Martir a escrit de sa propre main dedans la prison, après sa condamnation : mais, ce qui s'est ensuivy depuis cela, jusques à la fin et exécution de la sentence de mort, jouxte l'exemplaire à nous donné par le R. P. Robert de St Benoist moyne du mesme ordre qui a esté present à l'exécution d'icelle sentence et estoit chef de ceux qui tirèrent les corps des martyrs hors la fosse comme dessus." Ainsi jē l'atteste.

—"Frère Augustin, de St Jean, que dessus.

"Ce discours est digne d'estre mis en lumière,

"Faict a Douay, le quatrième de May 1611.

"George Colveneere. Docteur et Professeur en la S. Theologie, visitateur censeur des livres en l'Université de Douay."

"We, Br. Augustine, of St John, prior and Vicar-General of the English monks beyond the Pyrenees, of the Congregation of St Benedict in Spain, testify that the above account of the manner of the examination and trial of the R. Fr. John of Mervinia, has been faithfully translated from the English into Latin, according to the original document which the same blessed Martyr wrote with his own hand in prison after his condemnation: but what follows after that to the end and execution of the sentence of death, according to the document given to us by the R. Fr. Robert of St Benedict, monk of the same Order, who

lation of the martyr's own account, written in prison after the trial in English. Instead of translating it back into English, it has seemed better to take the Stoneyhurst document, which is translated from the Italian original, and supply any interesting details which have been passed over, from the French. Where they differ, we have, on the whole, followed the Italian version, as probably more accurate than the hasty impressions jotted down by the martyr, but we have always noted these divergencies, which indeed are never of great importance, and chiefly affect the order of events. The account of the trial given by Don Antonio Yepes is taken from the French life.

The trial was held in the Justice Hall of Newgate prison, before Abbot, Bishop of London,* Lord Chief-Justice Coke, the Recorder, and other judges.

Mr Somers was first asked by the pseudo-bishop if he would take the new oath of allegiance. He replied briefly but pointedly, that he would not take it in the form in which it was entered on the Statute-book.

Then the Bishop rose to his feet, and holding in his hands a bundle of writings (containing the examination of several Catholics, and among them that of Father John

was present at the execution of the said sentence, and was leader of those who drew the bodies of the martyrs from the pit as above described.

So I testify, the above named.

—*Br. Augustine of St. John.*

"This history deserves to see the light.

"Given at Douay, May 4, 1611.

"*George Colveneere*, Doctor and Professor of Theology. Visitor and Censor of books in the University of Douay."

* George Abbot rose very rapidly in dignities. He first was Bishop of Lichfield, but was translated to London, and enthroned February 12, 1609-10. "Throughout the whole year his letters to Cecil show that he was repressing Catholicism with a strong hand" ("Dictionary of National Biography"). On November 20, 1610, a little before Dom Roberts' trial, Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury (who had been previously at London, where he had often examined our martyr) died. On March 4, 1610-11, Abbot was formally nominated to Canterbury, and installed at Lambeth, April 9, 1611.

(who usually passed by the name of Roberts),* said: "Mr Roberts, you know how often you have been brought before me; what trouble I have taken for you, and with what kindness I have treated you, and all in order to persuade you to become a good subject to the king's majesty, who has shown you so much mercy.

"Hitherto you have only been punished with exile on several occasions, though you have been captured and recaptured time after time. And even still, in spite of your contempt for his laws and ordinances, notwithstanding your return contrary to his express command and will, still, I say, he desires to make one more trial of your loyalty and good disposition in his regard, and to grant you favour. It is therefore my duty to offer you the oath of allegiance, made and ordained expressly by both Houses of Parliament, in order to discover the loyalty and obedience of the recusant papists and priests who are subjects of his Majesty. Now what say you, Mr Roberts? Will you take this oath or not?"

"Sir," answered the other, "you know very well what I think about this oath; I have told you before.† I have not refused, nor ever shall refuse to take any oath of allegiance offered me, which shall in truth be only such; but this oath contains other matters besides allegiance. I have before offered to prove this to you, and to point out what part concerns matters of faith. If these parts be expunged, I was willing then, as I am now, to swear to the rest, which only concerns allegiance to my sovereign. At that time your Lordship promised me a

* Evidently that taken December 21, 1607.

† This looks as if it were really he who was taken in July, and brought several times before the Bishop of London.

hearing, but as yet you have never given me one. I therefore now again humbly beg that I may now be heard by this Court.”*

“No, no, Mr Roberts,” said the Bishop, “it is not seemly to discuss further what has been legally decreed and established by both Houses of Parliament, nor is it in my power to give such a leave, seeing that the Houses have ordained it, and that it cannot be altered. Wherefore you must simply answer whether you will take it or not.”

“No,” said Father Roberts, “I will not take it otherwise than as I have said.”

“Then we,” said the Bishop, “shall deal with you in a different manner.”

“In God’s name,” cried Father Roberts, “do as you will.”

The Recorder, too, tried a long while to persuade Father Roberts to take the oath, but he always gave the same answer.

The accusation against them was next called for; the jury were picked and called over, and then the indictment against Mr Somers was read. This was founded solely on the statute prohibiting priests made according to the Roman rite. Asked if he were guilty or not, he answered that as regards his priesthood he was guilty, “for priest I am,” said he, “but no traitor for all that.”†

* Father Pollen remarks: “The history of the trial and death of the Venerable John Roberts shows us enough of his vigorous manly character to make us regret that we know so little of his adventurous life. . . . His success was commensurate with his labours and sufferings, which were becomingly closed by his apprehension in the act of celebrating Mass, when a trial on the charge of priesthood, and a death bravely faced, were turned, as only a skilful missionary could turn them, into a notable occasion of bearing witness to the Faith” (“Acts of the English Martyrs,” pp. 143-144).

The present work is an attempt to throw a little more light on this heroic life and personality.

† This reminds us of the answer of the martyr’s patron saint, St Thomas of Canterbury, to his murderers. They cried, “Where is the Archbishop? where is the traitor?” He calmly replied, “Here is the Archbishop, but no traitor.”

"That will do," said the Recorder, and turning to the jury: "You have heard that he confesses he is a priest, and this is enough for you to find him guilty." *

They next read the indictment against Father Roberts, and then asked him if he were guilty or not. He answered that this was for them to prove.

"Ah," said the Lord Chief Justice, "I can see that this is a cunning fellow. But speak plainly, do you deny that you are a priest?"

Father Roberts: "Sir, are you my judge or my accuser? Both offices cannot be united in the same person."

Then the Bishop of London said: "Surely, my lords, we shall find this man of a different temper from his fellow." And getting up, he spoke as follows: "Mr Roberts, I am astonished that you want to raise such difficulties for yourself and this Bench. You cannot now be ignorant that I know you to be a monk of the Order of St Benedict, and, in fact, the Provincial of the monks of that Order in England."

"How is it proved, my lord," said Father Roberts, "that I know that you are acquainted with these things? If this is so, and has been confessed to you, pray read it out openly here in the presence of all."

The pseudo-bishop then handed him two sheets of paper, covered all over with writing, and after Father Roberts had looked at them carefully for awhile,

"Perhaps you recognise the handwriting?" said the Bishop.

* It would be well for those prejudiced persons who, in the face of history, still protest that no priest or Catholic was executed simply for his religion, to ponder over these words of the judge. Nothing at all was brought against either of our martyrs, except the one damning fact of their priesthood. This was sufficient to ensure their condemnation to one of the cruellest deaths ever devised by man's perverted ingenuity.

"Yea, my lord," said Father Roberts, "I know it well, and if it please you, pray have it read."

This was done, but first the Bishop made a long address to the assembly, purporting to give an account of its contents, but adding that Father Roberts was a person of high standing, and very dangerous to the State, and that he had been found on the very day of the Powder Treason in the house of the wife of its author and contriver.* He concluded by saying: "Now, you see, gentlemen, what sort of a man this is, and from all these circumstances you can infer how dangerous he is to the king and country."

Father Roberts replied: "It would be better for you to say no more about the Plot, as no one knows better than you do how entirely I established my innocence at the time before the lords of his Majesty's Privy Council. So clearly was I justified that they declared me to be a man of good repute, and in liberating me testified that no imputation whatever rested on me. They could not have done this if they had considered that I was in any way cognisant of or consenting to that conspiracy, nor should I be here to-day before this tribunal."

"No, Mr Roberts," replied the Bishop, "I do not intend to charge you with the guilt of the Plot, I only say it by way of induction, but by your leave I will pass on."

"Say anything you like," was the answer, "but do not say what is not the truth."

The Bishop then began a long discourse as to Father Roberts' first leaving England, in which country he had lived, as well as in Flanders, France, Spain, and Rome,†

* According to the French life this episode occurred after Dom John had confessed that he was a priest and a monk. "Le Sieur Persius" is also mentioned by name.

† This is an error, as we know the martyr was never in Rome.

also as to the time he spent in studies, his progress, and the degrees he had taken in the schools. Also that he had lived at the Benedictine Monastery of St James of Compostella in Spain, and then returned to England, and the mischief he had worked among the subjects of His Majesty. Then the aforesaid two sheets of writing were read containing the substance of his examination, most of the facts in which the Bishop had stated; but there was no word directly proving that he was a priest.

"What is the use of all this, my lord?" said Father Roberts. "Your lordship wants to prove me a priest by an induction similar to that whereby you tried to prove me guilty of the Powder Plot, for there is no proof in this writing that I am even the person referred to."

The Bishop then caused to be read a mandate from the Archbishop of Canterbury, ordering some of his officers and the keeper of the Gatehouse Prison to bring before him one John Roberts, priest and seminarist, a Benedictine monk and scandalous and dangerous person, who had recently escaped from prison.*

To this Father Roberts answered, "What is there in this mandate to prove that I am a priest? The Archbishop can call me what he chooses, but no one can maintain that that is sufficient proof in this case, which is a matter of life and death."

"Well, then," said the Bishop, "we will go a little further," and ordered them to read out a report of what passed in the examination of a certain Mr William Jennison, a Catholic gentleman, and at Father Roberts' second examination.†

* This was a mandate issued in 1608. It confirms Owen's story about the martyr's escape from the Gatehouse.

† This was Wm. Jenison, of Walworth Castle, county Durham, Esq. Father Roberts had received him and his wife Jane (daughter of Barnabas

The Father hearing this, and finding himself already weary, owing to a weakness brought on by many sufferings and a sickness which he had, said freely and cheerfully,

"My lord, I will spare you this trouble; I can see very well what you want, and I, too, wish you to have your desire. I say it not to you only, but to all the Court, and I acknowledge that I am a priest and a monk of the Order of St Benedict,* and you can take any advantage you like of that."

"Ah," said Justice Crook,† "now you confess at last what you are so much ashamed of."

"No, my lords," quickly answered the Father, "I am not ashamed of acknowledging either my faith or my religious profession. I am here to do so, and (putting his hand on his heart) if my one life were ten thousand lives, and every life ten thousand times more dear to me than mine is, I would give them all in this cause."

"And yet," said the Recorder,‡ "you will not die for your faith, but for treason; as it is not for being ordained priest, but for returning to this country to exercise your office of priest against the order of the law that you have been declared guilty."

"Sir," said Father Roberts, "I am bound by my priesthood to do the duty of a priest, and the reason I have returned to this country is to work for the salvation of souls, as I have done, and should continue to do, were I to live longer."

"No," said the Bishop, "you disturb the people, and

Scurlock, of Ireland, Esq.) as an oblate of our holy Order. James I. had been entertained at the noble Castle of Walworth on his first progress to England in 1603. They had a son Robert, who became a Jesuit in 1617 or 1619. (Gillow's "Bibliographical Dictionary.")

* According to the French life, the martyr here made the speech about St Augustine and St Gregory the Great, *vide infra*.

† In MS. Crocche.

‡ The French life attributes this speech to the Bishop.

you have come to deceive the subjects of his Majesty, and seduce them from their loyalty and obedience, and this is the reason of your coming back."

"No, my lord," said Father Roberts, "I do not deceive, but try to lead back to the right path those poor wandering souls whom you and your foolish ministers have led astray, and infected with a thousand deceits and heresies. If I deceive, then were our ancestors deceived by Blessed St Augustine, the Apostle of the English, who was sent here by the Pope of Rome, St Gregory the Great, and who converted this country from error to the Christian and Roman Catholic faith. This same faith which he professed I now teach. Nay, I am of the same religious Order, and have been professed of the same rule as St Augustine, and I am sent here by the same Apostolic See that sent him before me."

Upon this he was ordered to be silent, but he replied, "I must speak, as my mission is from Heaven. St Matthew says, chap. xxviii., 'Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' Your ministers do not do this, because they do not fulfil in their lives and actions the command of Christ: they do not administer the Sacrament of Penance * or of Extreme Unction. I do, and withal I teach obedience to princes as a matter of conscience against the false doctrine of Luther and his companions. All this I can prove to you." Then turning to the Bishop, he continued, "For you, indeed, sir, there is no time more suitable than now. Your lordship professes to be a man of learning, and you are considered a Bishop

* Private confession, though revived of late years, was then a thing unknown in the Anglican establishment. The judicious Hooker indeed confessed on his death-bed to his friend Saravia, but as Saravia was not a priest, even in the Anglican sense, this exception does more than prove the rule.

among the rest. I am here to speak in defence of my faith, my profession, and my religious rule, and I demand to be heard."

"No, no, my good sir," said the Chief Justice, "you are not come here to preach sermons; we will find you another place for that." *

"Yea, my lord," was the answer. "I know what that means, and I expected nothing else, for I know right well that that must be the end of the business." And thus did the Bishop decline the offer of disputation.

Notwithstanding that Father Roberts had acknowledged that he was a priest, the Bishop now had the confession of Mr Gienison† (Jenison) read, as well as that of Father Roberts. In these mention was made of certain Indulgences obtained by the Father for that gentleman and his wife, when they were received by him into the confraternity attached to the Benedictine Order.‡ There were also specified certain prayers, fastings, confessions and communions, as well as blessings and privileges for the living.

The Judge on the bench took occasion to laugh and jeer at these details, and the pseudo-bishop said that Roberts had been Superior of the Benedictine Order in England, and had himself ordained priests.

"You, my lords, and all you of the Bench," answered Father Roberts, "take occasion to jeer at the ordinances

* The French life adds that the people were much impressed by Dom John's resolute and constant words and bearing, and began to murmur, and show signs of inclining to his side, so that it was necessary to forbid him to say more.

† The French life calls him "Genesomus," showing the transformations the document has undergone by translation.

‡ These confraternities of oblates or confrates are still attached to the various monasteries and congregations of our Order. Our holy Father Pope Leo XIII. has recently enriched those attached to the monasteries of the Congregation of Beuron with new privileges and Indulgences.

and Indulgences of the Church of Christ. But do you choose one or more persons, and if I cannot clearly prove myself in all this to be in exact conformity with the ancient use and practice of the Catholic Church, then consider me a reprobate." Then turning to the Bishop, "Sir, you are quite mistaken; I am not Superior of the Benedictines, nor did I ever confer Orders, nor have I power to confer them."

The Bishop said he was not there at that time to dispute, but to act as a magistrate, and to fulfil his duty to him as a minister of justice.

"Well, then," said Father Roberts, "if that is so, allow me to ask you a question."

"Ask what you like," replied the Bishop.

"You, sir," said Father Roberts, "take to yourself the name of bishop, and make profession of religion and learning. Have you the boldness to offer a single instance, before these our miserable times, which you have read of, written of, or heard of, where a Catholic bishop has seated himself among secular judges in a capital case? Certainly you are not able to bring forward one. You would have done much better, my lord, to remain in your palace and in your church and chapter, reforming the dissolute conduct of your clergy, than to come and sit on this Bench, while matters of life and death are being decided."*

"I am not come here," the Bishop answered, "to give an account to you of the duty and service I owe to the King, my master in business of this kind."

"Well," said Father Roberts, "I wish to ask you and the other magistrates one more thing. These twelve men, who

* The French life puts this passage-of-arms with the pseudo-bishop at the beginning of the trial. It will be noted that Abbot makes no attempt to claim to be a Catholic bishop, or anything but a State official, in the service of the King.

have to give a verdict in this case, are ignorant persons, unable to discern or judge of the difference between the priesthood and treason. You strive to do an impossible thing, when you wish to make it appear that to be a priest is to be a traitor. That would make Christ Himself a traitor, and all His apostles—St Augustine also, the Apostle of England, and all the priests and bishops, who have succeeded him to this day, would also be esteemed traitors, and you would condemn them if they were brought before you. I therefore say that it is impossible that being a priest should make one a traitor.”

Here there were general murmurs, and before Father Roberts could explain, several of those on the Bench began to look at him and say, “Impossible for a priest to be a traitor?” They went on repeating these words till Father Roberts explained. “A priest as such, and in regard to his office as priest, which is sacred and holy, cannot be a traitor. But if a priest commit treason, I am not so ignorant as not to know that the man is a traitor, but not by reason of his being a priest or in consequence of exercising his priestly office. With this I was going to conclude before. However, as these are simple and ignorant men, I humbly beg the members of this Court to decide the case in their stead, so that these poor men may not be responsible for our blood.”

To this the Recorder answered: “We cannot do this. You must be content to let the law take its course, and you should be satisfied that your case is decided by twelve of your own countrymen. Where are the jury?”

“Yes,” added the Bishop, “these men are quite competent to judge rightly in your case.”

“Well,” said Father Roberts, “the account of our blood will be demanded of you and not of these poor men.”

Then the twelve men retired together, and returned after

■ short time and pronounced them guilty of high treason. The holy men heard the verdict with joy, as was apparent in their smiling faces; they prayed God to pardon those poor men who knew not what they did. They were then taken back to Newgate till the Saturday following.

The French life here apostrophizes the martyr as follows: "Ah, you refuse not to die for the glory of God, even though you desire to live for the salvation of your dear countrymen. . . . Behold, by their votes you are promoted and advanced to the palm and crown of martyrdom. O joyous news, sentence so longed desired, hour so often, so impatiently expected! . . . On each of the numerous times you returned again to your country you were filled with the resolution to accomplish the will of God at any cost, and with the expectation of death and suffering, like to him who among so many others was your forerunner on this road, *tibi vivere Christus et mori lucrum*, for thee to live was Christ, and to die was gain. . . . Return now to your prison and sing praises and thanksgivings to God the Creator, who has made you worthy to suffer reproach and to endure death for the name and for the cause of Jesus, like the holy apostles themselves!"

WHAT PASSED AT THEIR CONDEMNATION.

On Saturday, the 8th of December, and the Feast of the Conception of the most Holy Virgin,* Father Roberts and Mr Somers were taken back to the Court to hear their sentence. When they arrived, and had been placed with

* It must have been a special joy to our martyr thus to suffer on the Feast of our Blessed Lady, above all others honoured in Spain, 'a feast, too, which was kept in England (and by Benedictines) before any other part of Christendom. It was also a Saturday, the day first consecrated to Mary by the Benedictine Order.

the other criminals in the place set apart for those about to be sentenced to death, silence was proclaimed, and the Recorder addressed them as follows :

"You know that on Wednesday last you were brought up to trial, accused, convicted, and found guilty by twelve jurymen of the offence of high treason, and you also know that for the same reason you are now called to appear before this honourable Bench. If you have anything to say to show reason why I (by virtue of my office) should not pronounce sentence on you, say it now, for hereafter you cannot expect to be heard."

Father Roberts then demanded a hearing, and silence being again ordered, he spoke as follows :—*

"Most honourable Bench, and you, my dear countrymen, —You will not have forgotten—for I persuade myself many of you who are here now were here then—how three days ago, when I was examined, I demonstrated my innocence, and how I defended myself against the charges brought against me. The Bench simply sought to convict me of being a priest, saying that that of itself was high treason. I acknowledged then, as I do now, that I am a priest and a monk of the Holy Order of St Benedict, as were also St Augustine, St Laurence, St Paulinus, St Mellitus, and St Justus ; and as these monks converted our country from unbelief, so I have done what little I could to liberate it from heresy. I leave it to you, Mr Recorder and the rest of you, to judge whether this is high treason.

"But suppose I had really offended against the State, and were worthy of death, I ought not even to be judged by you, Mr Recorder, nor by this Court, nor by these twelve men, they not being men of my condition or quality, since it has been decreed by the Councils of the Church

* "Taking courage from the promise of our Lord that words would not fail him in this necessity" (French life).

and the Popes, the Vicars of Christ on earth, that priests should not be brought before secular judges to be examined,* but if their crimes are grave and merit death, that they must be first examined and found guilty by the ecclesiastical judges, and be degraded by them, and when all their ecclesiastical privileges are taken from them, then they can be handed over to the secular arm to be dealt with as the laws of God and man decree. This being the case, I do not see, Mr Recorder, that you are competent to pronounce sentence against me.”

The Recorder at this only smiled, and said, “Have you anything else to say?” To which he answered, “I have said enough, you can do what you please.”

The Recorder then said, “God have mercy on you,” and then went on to make a violent attack on them, especially on Father Roberts, pointing him out to the people as the most turbulent and dangerous priest in England, who had seduced and drawn the people from their allegiance, and had reconciled more subjects of his Majesty to the Pope than any other priest for many years. He was Superior of the Benedictines in England, had been taken for the Gunpowder Plot, and had broken out of prison. And after having received much grace and mercy from his Majesty, he had repaid nothing but ingratitude, by returning straightway to England, contrary to his Majesty’s express will and order.” †

After that, he pronounced sentence on each in turn, in the

* “And still less before heretics and deserters of the ancient religion” (French life).

† He also compared him unfavourably with the thieves and felons then before the Court. “For,” said he, “the priest has employed himself in robbing the king of the hearts of his vassals and subjects, whereas the other unfortunate men have merely robbed people of their money, constrained perhaps by necessity, in order to relieve their distress and satisfy their pressing wants.” The people, however, seemed much touched and moved by the fate of the priests (French life).

usual way for those convicted of high treason. When this was done Father Roberts asked again to speak. This the Recorder opposed, saying it was too late to say anything in his own defence, nor did the law permit it. But Father Roberts in a loud voice said :

"Dear countrymen, do not believe what this man has said, because I clearly showed my innocence the other day before all the judges." * Turning to the Recorder, "I pray God to pardon you and all who have plotted to shed my blood. I pardon you all with my whole heart. May God protect the King, the Queen, the Prince, and all the family of his Majesty, and give them grace to serve Him faithfully. I shall pray, as long as my life lasts, for his Majesty and for all his, and for the conversion of our country, and I hope that after my death I shall have better opportunity of doing so. May God grant us strength and patience!"

The Recorder took off his hat and said, "I congratulate you on making such a good end." Their hands were then bound and they were taken back to the prison.

* "Though I have been condemned to death, I am nevertheless not saddened or affrighted with the thought, for this death is desired and expected by all those who come, as I have come, to this kingdom to employ themselves in saving souls ; being well assured that in the end, amid so many careful searches and so many prying eyes, it must come to pass some day that they be discovered. And this we have foreseen afar off, and hold it for our certain fate, only the day and the hour being uncertain and now I pray from the bottom of my heart, God the Creator, Father of Mercies, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for Whose cause I am to die, to deign to bless you, and to grant to me the grace of suffering patiently and constantly the death decreed against me" (French life)

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAST HOURS.

As our martyrs were led back to prison on that ever memorable evening of the Conception of our Blessed Lady, the Benedictine remarked to his companion, that of all the days of his life this had been the happiest and most joyful.

Indeed from this moment his every word and action seem steeped in supernatural joy, illuminated by the light of coming martyrdom, and wonderful with an unearthly beauty. We must reverently try to gather together what fragments we may concerning the last hours this glorious servant of God spent in the world that was unworthy of him.

Among the Catholics who pressed to the doors of the prison, eager to see him, to kiss his hands, or beg his prayers and blessing, was that remarkable Spanish lady, Donna Luisa de Carvajal, of whom we have already spoken. She had come to England, as we have seen, fired with a supernatural love of suffering, longing for the crown of martyrdom, and resolved, if that supreme grace were not granted her, at least to spend her life and her substance in ministering to the persecuted servants of Christ. Already her glowing words and heroic example

had animated and consoled the angelic martyr Robert Drury, as he lay in his dungeon a prey to sore temptation.

Already she had herself endured imprisonment for her zeal for the Faith, and was now living in great peril in a little house in Holborn near the palace of the Spanish Ambassador. She was no stranger to our martyr; again and again had she ministered to him in his various imprisonments, and now had come the time to fulfil towards him the supreme offices of charity and devotion. We cannot do better than quote the touching words in which Luis Munoz, her biographer, tells the story.*

It was a Saturday, as we have seen, when our martyrs were condemned to death. Their sentence was to be executed with the same rapidity as had been their condemnation and trial, and it was decreed that they were to die upon the Monday, December 10. On their return to the prison, they were separated from the Catholic prisoners, and thrown into the horrible condemned cell, a kind of pit, dark and loathsome, which they shared with the sixteen criminals who had been condemned on the same day. Here they passed Saturday night and Sunday morning, so that it is very improbable that they can have enjoyed the consolation of holy Mass on this last Sunday of their lives. Here, however, the persevering charity of Donna Luisa contrived to penetrate to them. But we will let Luis Munoz speak—

“With great consolation of heart, she visited some hours before their deaths the holy martyrs, Father John Roberts, a Benedictine monk, and Thomas Somers, a secular priest. She had often been with them on the preceding days, and had sent them some pear tarts made in the Spanish fashion. They were confined in a dismal cell without air

* See Lady Georgiana Fullerton's "Life of Luisa de Carvajal," p. 248.

or light. During an imprisonment of eight or ten months the blessed Father Roberts had been preparing for death with an increasing devotion and tranquillity of soul.* He had often been in prison before, but not under sentence of death. Some days before he was brought to trial, some of his fellow prisoners made an opening in the wall, through which they escaped, but he would not take advantage of the opportunity, being of opinion that the shepherd should give his flock an example of courage and resignation.† He showed the deepest humility and spirituality during the time he was in captivity. After appearing in court for his trial he was taken back to prison, and found Luisa there waiting for him.

“When they came to fetch him, that he might hear his sentence read, he was so weak and exhausted from recent illness that a trembling came over him. His hands shook so much that he could hardly button his coat and tie the strings of his cloak. ‘See how I tremble,’ he said to Luisa. She bade him remember how the great Captain Himself trembled when arming for the fight, and said that his flesh was afraid of his heart. The holy man smiled, and bowed his head in thanks to her for these words.

“When he was removed from the tribunal, they took him to the portion of the building occupied by thieves and felons. In order that he might not be left alone at a moment which is a hard one, even to the bravest hearts, his faithful friend bribed the gaolers, and obtained access to him. Not content with this, she increased the bribe until they consented to transfer him, by a secret passage,

* This is evidently a mistake, even if Dom Roberts be the “Superior of the Benedictines,” who was arrested in July.

† He must have felt his hour had come, as he had made no scruple about escape before.

into the part of the prison where the rest of the Catholics were confined. His entrance was greeted with exclamations of joy from all those assembled in that place, many of them friends and acquaintances of Luisa, who had come to take leave of him. When it was announced that they (he and Mr Somers) were to die for their faith, Luisa fell at their feet, kissed them with the greatest fervour, wishing them joy, and expressing her envy of their happiness. 'I wished to show,' she said, writing to a friend, 'though by a worthless and ill-chosen representative, the just and high esteem in which the Spanish nation holds the martyrs' name and state, and to excite to the utmost the courage of those heroic souls, so free from the least taint of presumption and vain glory, and even from the horror which would naturally be felt at such a death as their sentence described.'

"They then sat down to supper—twenty prisoners for conscience sake—twenty confessors of the Faith—Luisa presiding at the head of the table. On no other occasion would she have accepted that post of honour, but she was invited to sit between the two martyrs, and for the sake of that privilege, consented to occupy it. The meal was a devout and a joyful one, heavenly the refreshments ministered to the guests, great the fervour and spiritual delight which our Lord bestowed on His valiant soldiers, giving them that peace which passeth all understanding. Scarcely any one thought of eating. Some were shedding tears of joy at the hope which, in our Lord, they had of sitting down in a few hours at a divine banquet, where God ministers Himself to His elect. The others were gazing at them with eyes full of holy envy, wishing that it had been given to them to share their happiness. As to Luisa, her heart was lifted up far above even this touching scene. Rapt in contemplation, she saw in spirit

our Lord at the Last Supper, and it seemed at moments as if she only remained in appearance on earth, so tender, so devout, was the expression of her countenance, and her words so full of holy fire and sweetness. It affected every one present, to hear her imploring the blessing of the martyrs, and entreating them to obtain for her an end like their own. This was her constant prayer to all those whom she saw about to die in the same manner. The two holy priests kept also recommending themselves to her prayers, and charging her to plead for them during their last moments.

"In the course of the evening, Father Roberts said to her, 'Do not you think I may be causing disedification by my great glee? Would it not be better to retire into a corner and give myself up to prayer?' 'No; certainly not,' Luisa answered. 'You cannot be better employed than in letting them all see with what cheerful courage you are about to die for Christ.'"

We doubt if any more beautiful story than this is to found in the Acts of the primitive martyrs.

This is how our Benedictine martyr prepared for his horrible death, with a heart overflowing with joy, hardly able to contain himself for gladness; faith had so transfigured his soul, that the fear of death and the physical weakness from which he had been suffering, had utterly vanished, absorbed in this divine and supernatural joy. And if anything can be more beautiful than his desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ, surely it was the humility which prompted his question to Donna Luisa. Ah, great and mighty soul, truly the stately fabric of thy sanctity has been founded deep down on the hidden rock of humility, and therefore it shall endure in the day of trial!

The story, too, is admirably corroborated by the witness

of the State papers, which yield fresh details of the wonderful scene. Though at the risk of anticipating, we must quote their testimony here.

On February 8, 1611, hardly two months after the martyrdom, Secretary Lake wrote from the royal palace of Theobald's to Lord Salisbury as follows :* "I was commanded by his Majesty to write somewhat earnestly to your lordship, in a matter whereof he sayth he hath been informed since his coming hither by a servant of his own, who assureth him to know the matter to be true. That at the late execution of the two priests, the old lady who is in the Spanish ambassador's house went the night before publicly to the prison, and there supped with the priests ; which his Majesty taketh to be fowle disorder, and not to be suffered. For though he hear enough of the Spanish ambassador's† liberality to priests and persons of that religion in prison, he careth not merely for the spending of their money. But a prison the night before an execution to be visited publicly, and by a lady, he thinketh it unsufferably (*sic*), and thereby judgeth of the truth of former informations which his Majesty hath had of the licentiousness of prisons ; and requireth your lordship, that as he hath already given order to the Bishop of London to examine on his part whom he can, so your lordship should make order with the Recorder to examine on his part, both the keeper of the prison and all other ministers, and to finde out not only the truth of this matter, but of all other like disorders, and to find some remedy for them, as well by punishing of that what is past, as by provision for the time to come." On the margin of this letter Cecil has noted—"His Majesty dis-

* Dom. James I. lxi. No. 88.

† Don Alonzo de Velasco, Conde de la Rivilla.

lyketh that the old Spanish lady supped with the priests the night before their execution."

Lake returns to the charge on the very next day.* Cecil had replied that he would speak to the Ambassador, at which the King "marvelleth much," for "he holdeth it to be utterly needless, saying, that if he were an ambassador he would do the like. But that satisfaction which his Majesty expecteth, is present and exemplary punishment upon the keeper of the prison. . . . Your lordship need not doubt of the information, for that his Majesty taketh on his honour to be true, having received it from a servant of his own, who was present at the supper, or in the house where the supper was. . . . His Majesty sayth that they be little better than traytors that hath suffered it, and he wondereth that a complaint so often made, has been so long without punishment. He expecteth your lordship should cause something to be done presently and exemplarily, and is very earnest in commanding me to send away presently letters to that effect; but for the ambassador it seemeth that he would not have your lordship to speak with him of the matter."

His Majesty was evidently very wrathful; on February 22, Lake writes again:† "It was this morning before I could have any access to his Majesty upon your letters received yesterday, because his Majesty, after his return from his sport, went to bed troubled with the cold. This morning he hath seen your letters; and for the matter of the prisons, because the matter is undoubtedly true as appeareth by the Recorder's letter, he would have your lordship consider of the punishment that is to be done upon the keeper." He still thinks it of no use to expostulate with the Ambassador, who might very well

* Dom James I., lxi. No. 92.

† *Ibid.*, No. 98.

reply that it was in the power of the King's own officers to redress the abuse. . . . "But finding by Mr Recorder's letter that the ambassador's priest doth usually repair thither; his Majesty thinketh that to be a point whereupon the ambassador is to be spoken with, and to be let understand that his priest is to be allowed unto him, but only for his own domesticall use, and that if he permit him to visit prisons, or to use his functions abroad, or to meddle out of his own family, his Majesty must take that in ill part . . . the information being true that the priest doth haunt the prisons. And when his Majesty doth hear from the Bishop of London, he will further advertise your lordship of his mind.* That the woman came disguised, his Majesty says is utterly untrue."

Another letter (written on the same day apparently) † the King had just received the report of the Bishop of London, with the examination of the keeper and his servants. The keeper's confession "conteyneth matter enough, as his Majesty saith, to show the abuse of the prisons and the treachery of the keeper that would in his own presence suffer to a priest condemned of treason an adoration to be made, which is a kind of idolatry, as his Majesty sayth. And therefore this confession, as it is good ground for my lords of the councill in reason of State to consider how this keeper is to be punished, so likewise to take some order for all prisons; for his Majesty conceaveth it to be all one to suffer priests to say Mass in all the prisons as to say them in churches, and it amounteth to as much as a toleration in religion, (!) and is very earnest that some exemplary course be taken in it, and commanded me to write zealously."

And now we come to the "examination of Simon

* Note by Cecil in the margin: "The Spanish ambassador to be spoken with if it be true that his priest doth visitt the prisons."

† Dom James I., lxi. No. 99.

Houghton, keeper of Newgate, taken before the Reverend father in God, the Lord Bishop of London." *

"He saith that about one week before Roberts, the Benedictine and monk, was executed, the Spanish ambassador, or some of his house did send unto Roberts into Newgate a banquet of divers tartes and very many other sorts of sweetmeats. †

"And the night before the execution of the said Roberts (as this examine hath heard since that time), there came unto Newgate a great lady disguised as if she had been a meaner woman; ‡ but whether she were an outlandish woman or not, this examine cannot tell. But saith his servant Reniolds, (*sic*) who keepeth the key of that place where the priests lie, can best tell.

"Between nine and ten of the clock at night, when Roberts was in the morning to be executed, one Margaret Ashe, and another younger woman, who were laundresses to the priests in Newgate, did wash the feet of the said Roberts, and presently thereupon, Mr Scott, with other priests and recusant papists (which lay in the same room, being eight or more in number), did, in the presence of this examine, kneel down and kiss the feet of the said Roberts, saying certain words in Latin, which this examine understood not. § He addeth further that yesterday, being Sondag, in the morning, there came a Spaniard from the ambassador's house to speak with some of the popish prisoners in Newgate, but who it was with whom he desired to speak this examine cannot tell, but saith his servant Reynolds can declare."

* Dom James I., lxi. No. 91.

† Donna Luisa's pear tarts. This must have been a day or two only after the capture.

‡ It was Donna's Luisa's custom to wear the poorest attire, out of love for holy poverty. The King was quite right; she was *not* disguised.

§ This was the "adoration" or "idolatry" which so greatly roused the King's Protestant ire. *Quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium pacem.*

"The examination of Abraham Reynolds," now follows. He pretended to know nothing of the "banquet or sweet-meats" sent to Dom Roberts. "If there were any such thing sent, it was while this examine was abroad, when some other bodie did keepe the doore."

"He confesseth that the night before the death of Roberts, there came in a gentlewoman, about nine of the clock at night, desirous to see Roberts, and with her came a man or two, and two women, but whether this gentlewoman were a Spaniard and a ladie or no, this examine knoweth not."

"He saith that the coming of this gentlewoman was before supper, and that she did not sup with Roberts, but while she was with him there was Sommers the priest, and one Draper (?), as he thinketh, in the room; but what speech she had with Roberts this examine cannot tell, because he stayed at the door where he saw them, but went not in."

"Whether any of the prisoners did any reverence to Roberts the night before his death, this examine knoweth not: but in the morning of his execution this examine saw five or six of the priests and popish prisoners in Newgate come to Roberts at his going out towards Tyburn, and to kneel down unto him; but he, having a heavy heart, passed by without any regard to them; whereupon they earnestly pulled him by the gown, and he, waving his hand over them, blessed them, but said nothing that this examine heard."

Next comes Margaret Ashe, the laundress. She "saith that she useth to dress meat for the priests in Newgate, and that the night before Roberts was executed, she being in the same room where Roberts and divers other prisoners supped, saw that there were some strangers, and as she thinketh, some women which supped with

them, but whether there were any Spanish ladies or no amongst that company she knoweth not; because her care was to dress their meat, and she did not much mark the guests that were there."

This Margaret was evidently a devout Catholic, and was as careful as the keepers, though perhaps from a higher motive than theirs, not to get Donna Luisa into trouble.*

Her companion Christian Darne was next examined, and she too did not "remember that ever a Spanish ladie did dyne or suppe with Roberts the priest, or any of the other prisoners," although she was accustomed to wait on them at their meals; "but she confesseth it is true that an old Spanish ladie hath two separate tymes, in the knowledge of this examate, come to Newgate, but it was before the execution of Roberts and not since; and then the cause of her coming was to see Roberts, with whom it seemeth she had some acquaintance, but whether either of these two times was the night before Roberts was executed she doth not remember."

This is all the Bishop of London was able to get out of the culprits, and we do not find what was the "exemplary punishment" inflicted on them. Probably the keeper and his servant lost their places, for the King evidently took the matter greatly to heart. His informant appears to have been a certain Sir George Chaworth,† who did not inspire Secretary Lake with such implicit trust as he did his master. In fact he says, "I gather that the informa-

* Donna Luisa, however, did get into trouble through her devotion to our martyr. Abbot was furious, and denounced her to the Council, saying she did more harm than twenty priests together. He made a special grievance of the pear tarts, which he acknowledged were excellent! The Council decided she should be banished from the kingdom: but she was protected by the Spanish Ambassador, and so escaped their fury.

† Letter from Lake to Salisbury. Dom James I., lxi. No. 103.

tion came from him, and mistrusted it the more because of his little judgment." Cecil too seems to have doubted the fact; the mysterious lady was a widow, he thought; but the King was in the right after all, as we know.

Thanks to the depositions, we are thus able to follow our martyr very closely during these last hours of his earthly life. The washing and kissing of his feet, the farewell supper, the last blessing as on the morrow he passes to the hurdle on which he is to be dragged to Tyburn, all come up most vividly before us. The hour of the final conflict has arrived, and we are to see how he bore himself on the field.

It will be noted that among those who performed the last touching ceremony of kissing the martyr's feet, was a "Mr Scott." It is very consoling to find that our martyr had thus by his side at his supreme hour the beloved convert and disciple, now become his brother in religion. Dom Maurus Scott had only just arrived from Spain, just in time, as Challoner says, to see his ghostly father "hurried away to death for his faith and character." He himself had been arrested three days after his arrival in London. It is probable that he was one of the five priests taken with our martyr on Advent Sunday. Be that as it may, he had the consolation of witnessing and cheering the last hours of him to whom he owed his conversion and vocation. He had to learn yet another lesson from that holy master—how to die as a monk and martyr should. Eighteen months only were to elapse before he would follow him along the same glorious path, fired with the same enthusiasm, radiant with the same supernatural joy. And so he kisses his master's feet, and, like Eliseus of old, begs for a portion of his spirit.

"*Quam speciosi,*" Yepes cries out with enthusiasm, "*quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium pacem, evangelizantium*

*bona!** and St Paul adds *super montes* to express the celestial reward reserved in heaven for those who shed their blood and give their lives for Christ. For not only does God place the soles of their feet on the eternal hills, but also here on earth they are honoured by Popes and Emperors who bow their heads beneath them. And I hope by the divine mercy that many of those who now in England assist and take part in these cruel martyrdoms will one day make their humble submission, and kiss, not only the feet, but also adore the prints of their feet, as the Holy Scripture saith (Psalm cxxxi). For God knows thus to honour and reward the feet severed for His service, placing them above the tiaras of pontiffs and the crowns of kings; and He causes that which is trampled on and despised in this world to become exceeding precious, and those things that in men's eyes are most vile to become most priceless relics, because they have been touched by the soles of the feet of His Saints."†

It may also be remarked before we leave the subject of this "Adoration," which made James I. so angry, that washing and kissing the feet of guests or pilgrims, as of the brethren themselves, is an ancient monastic custom, ordained in the Rule of St Benedict, and one very familiar to the monks of the Spanish Congregation.

Another monk, one of Dom John's own monastery of San Martin, and likewise an old student of the Seminary of Valladolid, was near him in these last hours. He, however, was at liberty, and so was able to go in disguise to Tyburn, and mix among the crowd who witnessed the martyrdom. This was Dom Robert of St Benedict

* "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who announce the gospel of peace."

† Yepes, vol. i. "Centuria Secunda" (anno de Cristo, 605), cap. iii. p. 449. He is speaking of the martyrdom of the Ven. George Gervase, O.S.B., but the quotation applies with equal force to our martyr.

Haddock, who belonged to the well-known Lancashire family of Haydock or Haddock, of Cottam Hall, and was therefore a relative of the Ven. martyr, George Haydock.* To him we owe (as we have seen from the attestation of Dom Augustine) a long and detailed account of Dom John's glorious martyrdom. No doubt, Dom Robert will have been present at the farewell supper also.

And so we pass to the last scene of all, to the bloody gibbet which is to be the throne of the martyr's triumph, to the day which is to unite the monk to his Beloved, the servant to his Master, the martyr to his God.†

* See "The Haydock Papers" by Mr Gillow, *passim*. He became a monk in October 1603, and came to England 1607.

† An interesting relic has recently been found at St Sepulchre's Church, opposite Newgate Prison. It is the bell which was rung during the night before our martyr's execution. "In 1605, one R. Dowe, citizen and merchant taylor, either gave or bequeathed £50 on the conditions that the bellman of St Sepulchre's Church should, after twelve o'clock the preceding night, and also early in the morning of an execution, ring certain tolls outside Newgate, and afterwards, in a most Christian manner, put the condemned in mind of their present condition and approaching end. And again, when in the cart, and brought before the walls of the church, the clerk was to stand ready with the same bell, and after certain tolls read a prayer, desiring all people there present to pray for the unfortunate criminals, the beadle of the Merchant Taylors' Company being allowed an honest stipend to see that the ceremony was regularly performed." The following doggerel rhyme was rehearsed by the clerk outside the cells:—

"All you that in the condemned hold do lie
Prepare, for to-morrow you shall die.
Watch all and pray, the hour is drawing near
That you before the Almighty must appear.
Examine well yourselves, in time repent,
That you may not to eternal flames be sent.
And when St Sepulchre's bell in the morning tolls,
The Lord have mercy on your souls."

—*Past Twelve O'clock.*

The bell is to be seen fixed to a ledge in the north aisle of the Church. It is figured in the *Daily Graphic*, December 14, 1896.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MARTYR'S CROWN.

THERE is no lack of contemporary accounts of the glorious martyrdom which was consummated on December 10, 1610. Besides the French life, Dom John Roberts' last combat has been described in several MSS., which have come down to us. Most noteworthy of these is that printed by Father Pollen, from which we have quoted in our account of the trial. Then there is a MS. printed by Bishop Challoner, which was sent him from St Omer, and which, though quite an independent source of information, strongly corroborates the fidelity of the Italian MS. A third account is to be found in the Westminster Archives,* which collection also supplies a fourth,† written in Italian by Father Robert Jones, S.J., together with a description of Mr Somers' carriage at his death.‡ Then we have a letter of Father Coffin, S.J., written in Latin to one of his brethren, May 28, 1611,§ and a letter of Father Thomas Cornforth, S.J., to Father Persons (under the *alias* of Signor Marco Mercante), and dated October 2, 1611,|| which is specially interesting as quoting the testimony of

* IX. 106, p. 343. † IX. 74, p. 249. ‡ IX. 109, p. 351.

§ Stonyhurst MSS. Anglia iii. 103, f. 207.

|| Stonyhurst MSS. Anglia iii. n. 105. And here we must express our joy to see no less than three prominent Jesuit Fathers extolling the virtues and heroic constancy of our martyr. Father Jones says of him that "*he was always most friendly to the other religious working in England,*" a very strong testimony from the Jesuit Provincial.

a certain Protestant schoolmaster, who was present at the martyrdom. Lastly, there is the Spanish account written by Don Antonio Yepes. Thus, we have no less than nine contemporary accounts of the martyrdom, and there may no doubt be others which have escaped our search. All these accounts corroborate each other in a wonderful manner; the only difficulty is so to collate them as to miss no detail of interest. We here, too, give the preference to the French life, as being from the most authentic of all possible sources.

It was a dreary December morning, and the fog hung heavily over the sinful city, when our martyrs were led forth from the prison door, and delivered over to the care of the Sheriff of Middlesex, who was to preside at their execution at Tyburn. We have a minute account of their appearance and bearing as they were drawn, tied to the hurdle, after the cart which contained the malefactors who were to be executed with them. For they, like their Lord, were to be numbered with the transgressors, and hang between thieves and murderers.

"I rode to meet with them," writes the Protestant schoolmaster, describing their triumphal passage to the place of execution. "Mr Sommers, of sad, settled countenance (as in a strong meditation), for I marked him much and long, and sometimes seen to pray softly, and his hands for the most part hid, and fingers indented one with the other; but spake to no man, nor seemed to be moved with the company nor anything on the way;—about the age of forty or more." *

"The other Mr Roberts, of a most cheerful countenance,

* We must devote a few lines to Dom John Roberts' fellow martyr. He was a secular priest, born in Westmoreland, and known on the mission by the name of Wilson. He had been a schoolmaster in England, and after his studies at Douay, and ordination at Arras, Easter Eve, 1606, was sent on the English Mission, June 30, 1606, together with the Ven. Matthew

almost always smiling when he looked up or talked, for sometimes he would lie with his eyes shut, and his hat pulled down. After they came to the gallows, they stayed on the hurdle till the other sixteen had the ropes about their necks (which was more than half-an-hour), in which time one Mr Williams (to wit a minister) came to him—I stood close by them—and entreated him, now setting aside all controversies, to settle his thoughts on that main point, his faith in Christ for the salvation of his soul. He took the counsel very kindly, and answered that he did so."

The French life tells us that during the passage to Tyburn (a painful journey of about three miles over stony and miry roads), many persons saluted the martyrs with deep respect and reverence, and came up to beg their blessing; and this is corroborated by Father Coffin's account.*

They were allowed to sit up on the hurdle during the half hour of waiting; after which the executioners desired to drag them up to the gibbet, which was sixteen or eighteen yards off, but the throng of people assembled to witness the martyrdom was so dense that they found this

Flathers. His residence was in London, and his labours there were so fruitful that he was known on the mission as *Parochus Londinensis*. He was banished in 1610 with several other priests, and was offered the Procuratorship of his old College by Dr Worthington, the President. But his heart was with his flock, and he quickly returned to them. He was not a man of great learning (he only studied one year at Douay), but was noted for his heavenly charity. An autograph letter of his is preserved in the Westminster Archives, vol. ix. p. 247, written from Douay in 1610 to his cousin, Mrs Cosins, in Chancery Lane.

* "*Dum hi per plateas et compita ut moris est raptarentur, magna, inspectante populo Catholicorum accessit multitudo, qui palam provoluti genibus a Christi jam candidatis martyribus benedictionem postulabant, quos neque Quæstores neque Satellites neque promiscua populi colluvies, addo neque ministrorum grex, nam hæc pecora campi insolentius cæteris se gerere solent, verbo vel signo aliquo prohibuerunt, sed aperte tantam animi constantiam et ardentem pietatis zelum fere omnes magnis præconiis extulerunt.*"—Father Coffin, S.J.

impossible. They therefore untied the two priests, and they then walked to the gallows.

"Then first Dom John was loosed from the hurdle, and placed on his feet, with a grave and composed demeanour, and a face bright and joyous, without the slightest sign of trouble or depression, he began to walk forward towards one of the carts, in which eight of the aforesaid malefactors were standing, already attached to the gibbet (the other eight being in another cart); but when he tried to get up into it, he had not the strength by himself, and it was necessary to help him and almost to lift him up into it, on account of the great weakness, which the illness from which he had long suffered had caused him."*

"He took notice upon this occasion that he was to be hanged among thieves, upon which one of the officers put him in mind that his Master was so served."†

"Scarcely had he got into the cart than he at once spoke to the malefactors (who were singing Genevan psalms in the vulgar tongue as a preparation for death), and begged them to cease tiring their chests and throats with these chants, 'because,' as he said, 'you only trouble me and do not profit yourselves in the least.'‡ He then stretched out his hands, as far as his fetters permitted, to bless the thieves, and continued: 'Here we are all going to die, from which there is no hope of escape, and therefore I assure you that if you die in the faith, and with the faith now professed and taught in this kingdom, every one of you, without any doubt, will undoubtedly perish everlastingly, for without the Faith of the true Church, that is the Roman, it is impossible to please God. Now, then, there yet remains to you a little time in which to win eternal life; use it to your profit, and turn with all your heart to

* French life.

† Challoner.

‡ French life.

God, embracing the holy and true Catholic Faith, and asking pardon for all your sins, in order that you may become living members of the Church, and partakers in the life of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, which is the Church, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman. If you do this you can be saved, and be made worthy of entering, after these two hours of mortal life, into the life of a blessed eternity.' And having said this, he gave them his blessing, and afterwards turned to the other eight malefactors, who were in the other cart, and used to them the like words and exhortations, blessing them likewise, even though a heretical minister was there present. And the minister did not object a whit to his words, and did not contradict him even by a single word."

The Italian account says that he begged these poor thieves to say with him, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, and I desire to die a member of that Church. I repent and am sorry for having lived so naughty and wicked a life, and that I have so grievously offended my sweet and merciful Saviour," promising them that if they would say these words truly and from the heart, he would absolve them, "and then my soul for yours."

"At these words, spoken with so much love and unction, one of the poor wretches was so affected that he burst into tears. The Father then exhorted him specially, and prayed silently to God for him, covering his face with his hand, then again spoke to him in a low voice. In the end, the poor creature publicly professed that he died a Catholic. What further occurred, it is not possible to be certain of."

A churlish officer often tried to prevent his speaking, but the minister, as we have said, seemed overawed by the authority of the holy man, and by the doctrine which he taught, and did not actively interfere with him.

Finally, when the officer refused to allow him any longer to continue his apostolic work, the martyr fell on his knees, and making the sign of the Cross on the gibbet, reverently kissed it, "and as he had before worked with so much love and pity for the eternal salvation of others, he now for a short time gave himself up to thinking of his own soul."

The executioner now began to pull off his gown, and prepare him for the sacrifice. While he was doing so, the martyr asked the sheriff if he might speak to the people. To which the sheriff, being a man of much humanity, replied, "Yes, Mr Roberts, you shall speak." But his weakness was so great that he would have been unable to be heard by the crowd, had not the sheriff permitted him to drink a little *aqua vitæ* or *eau comfortable*, which was presented to him by a Catholic present in a little glass phial.

After he had drunk a few drops, he turned to the people and asked their permission to speak, to which they replied with a loud murmur of assent.

He then began to address them, but was at once interrupted by the minister and some of the malefactors, who began again to sing their Genevan psalms. He begged them to cease, and turning to the sheriff, he said very mildly, "In courtesy, sir, remember I cannot be heard through that singing."

The sheriff on this commanded silence, and Dom Roberts began: "*Audite cæli quæ loquor, audiat terra verba oris mei.*"* Which having englished, saying, "Honourable, worshipful, and my well-beloved friends," and beginning to proceed, he was again interrupted by the said churlish

* "Hark ye heavens to that which I say, and let the earth hearken to the words of my mouth."

officer, whose insolence was such that he was publicly reproved and rebuked by many gentlemen of great condition for his barbarous churlishness.

The Father then blessed the people, and continued in the midst of a great silence: "My lords here present, and all you others who enjoy with me the honour and the happiness to be natives of this kingdom of England, our sweet country, may it please you to hear that I stand now in this place ready to suffer the death to which I am condemned, for no other reason but that, being a priest, I must die. This has been made and declared to be the crime of *lèse-majesté* by an Act of the 28th year of Queen Elizabeth, if I mistake not. I have not committed any other crime but this one; whence it is clear that I die for the cause of religion, the religion, I say, which is the same as that brought here in the days of old by St Augustine, Apostle of England, who was sent hither in the year 596 by the great Pope St Gregory, and delivered this people from unbelief and idolatry, and converted it to the Christian faith and the knowledge of the living God. There is a great likeness in our actions and intentions. He was a monk of the Order of St Benedict; I am one likewise. The vows of my Order, and the habit I wear, are the same as his, and I observe the same Rule, and live in the same Religious Order as he did. He converted souls from the errors of Paganism and idolatry; I have snatched them from the jaws of heresy. He was sent here by St Gregory the Pope, Vicar of Jesus Christ, and successor of St Peter. And I by the same, not indeed in person, but in office and succession. All this I have protested, declared, and affirmed in open court, before the judges and people assembled there. It is for these reasons that I have been treated as a criminal and condemned to death; and I

repeat and confirm it now once more before you all, in this place where I must lose my life."

Having said these words, lo, they bring Mr Somers, the other priest, to the same cart; and Dom John moved to meet him with a face and demeanour radiant with joy, and gave him his hand to help him up into the cart, saying, "Come, sir, come and welcome, brother and companion in the same glorious triumph;" and then approaching each other, they embraced and blessed one another with great and tender affection, showing one to the other, and proving to the spectators, their mutual charity and truly pious love. Then was it permitted to them to have a little leisure to speak secretly one to the other. After which the hangmen, being desirous to carry out their office, began with Dom John, whom they bound in the manner accustomed, to fit him for the last penalty, and then did they same to Mr Somers. During this, Dom John fixing his eyes on the assembly, looked at them with great attention, choosing out those whom he knew, and greeting them with a glance, while to all who saluted him, he returned the same salutations, and affectionately blessed them. Lastly, he made a short and pathetic discourse to the people in which he explained to them these words, "*Memorare novissima tua et in æternum non peccabis*," and these others, "*Omnes nos manifestari oportet ante tribunal Christi*."* And having finished this, he remained silent a moment as if to regain breath, and then cried out in a loud and clear voice, "*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*"; and this he repeated in English, trying his utmost to utter it in a very strong voice, calling out, "*Outside the true Church there is no salvation. One God, one Faith, without that Faith it is impossible to please God.*"

* "Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."

"We must all appear before the tribunal of Christ."

One of the sergeants rebuked him for these words, alleging that it was not permitted to say such things to the people. But another officer contradicted him, saying, "I hear nothing improper from his mouth; there is nothing in these words to find fault with; I would that he had never said worse things than he has just now." The sheriff also interposed in his favour, saying, "As long as he utters nothing to the prejudice of the king our master, he cannot be forbidden to speak." The first officer who thus molested Dom John, was not at all pleased with this, and replied that he ought not to be allowed thus to allure and seduce the people by such words, and such adroit discourses. But Dom John defended himself, saying: "I say nothing against the king our master, but, on the contrary, I pray very humbly God our Creator to deign to preserve him, together with the queen, the prince, their children, his honourable senate, and most prudent council, and all his faithful vassals and obedient subjects; for it is not the king that causes us to die—he is a merciful king who does not shed the blood of his subjects for whom he would be willing to shed his own blood—but it is the cruel monster, heresy. Monster, I say, which is the cause of all the evils we endure, for it is she who has produced them, and *no other than heresy is the cause of my death.*" Having said this, he gave to his friends his last and most joyous farewell, leaving them also his parting benediction; and then placing his hands over his eyes, he gave himself for a while to recollection, and to the contemplation of our Lord God, of Whom in so short a space he expected the beatific vision, since nought but the veil of the flesh still hindered him from this supreme joy, and this veil was now about to be destroyed by death.

Meanwhile they prepared Mr Somers, which being done,

the hangmen told Dom John that his companion was now ready. Hearing this, he raised his face from his hands, and looking at the fire which was already lighted, to show the gaiety of his heart, he said pleasantly, "Here is a hot breakfast towards, despite the cold weather." A bystander, thinking he must feel cold after standing so long with his clothes loosed, offered him a nightcap to cover his head, but he said with a smile, "Do not trouble yourself about that, sir; I am not afraid that hereafter I shall ever suffer from headache."

Mr Somers, who had had irons on his hands up till now, then began to speak, saying with a lively and sweet countenance: "*Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus, Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus;*" and added, "Father Roberts has told you the reason why we are to suffer death, and so it is not necessary that I should repeat more than one thing. I did not refuse to take the oath because I refused any sort of allegiance that his Majesty the king could justly demand of me. I refused on account of the matters of faith included in that oath, and that is why it has been forbidden by his Holiness the Pope, whom all of us who are sheep of Christ are bound to obey in matters of faith. I pray you all, therefore, and exhort you to be obedient to the chief shepherd of the Church of God." He concluded with the same words as the Benedictine: "*Out of the Catholic Church there is no salvation; out of Noah's ark was not one saved.*"

Lastly, Dom Roberts turned to the people and asked them to excuse his speaking any more, as his strength failed him, but he begged those who were Catholics to pray for him. Then, turning to his dear companion, Mr Somers, they embraced and blessed one another, and then spoke for a short time in a low voice (no doubt confessing), until they were told that the moment had come when they must die.

Both together once more as well as they could blessed the people again, and while they waited with great constancy and cheerfulness for the cart to be driven away they used the following words. Dom Roberts said: "*Omnes Sancti et Sunctae Dei intercedite pro nobis,*" and Mr Somers said: "*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum ;*" when on a sudden the two carts were pulled away at the same moment, and the two martyrs in the midst of the sixteen criminals were left hanging, and quietly rendered their souls into the hands of the holy angels.

"And thus," continues the French life, "these two brave champions, skilful knights, swift runners, and strong wrestlers in this combat of the Catholic Faith, together, side by side, the cart on which they stood being removed, with great constancy, invincible courage, and steadfast generosity, to the consolation and edification of the spectators, while hanging on the gibbet, offered, rendered, and sacrificed their bodies and souls as holy, pure, and most sweet victims to the King of martyrs, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Himself the exceeding great reward of the martyrs' toils and anguish. Proceed forth quickly then, O noble souls, the gate of your prison house is open ; enter into freedom, your servitude is ended ; receive life, for you have conquered death ; plunge into that vast ocean of eternal joy, to which God the Father, who created you, Jesus Christ, who redeemed you, the Holy Spirit, who was poured forth on you, call and invite you, together with Mary Virgin, Queen of Heaven, whom you have ever served and preached, with the holy angels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and all the saints with whom you have been incorporated in the Church Militant here below. Now will you be enrolled in the ranks of the Church Triumphant. Make us partakers of your merits and intercessions, in order that

we may one day be happily united to your most blissful company."

"But to continue, as their bodies were hanging thus, they were treated with a consideration which is rare indeed in the case of priests martyred for the Faith, since they left them there until they were quite dead, instead of, according to the usual custom, cutting them down while still alive. After they were dead they were cut down, and the bodies were dragged away from the gallows, and the executioners disrobed them, and practised the usual horrible mutilations. And when they had disembowelled them, and seizing their hearts, according to the custom, showed them to the people, crying, 'Behold the hearts of traitors!' the people instead of loudly crying in reply, 'Long live the king!' as they are wont to do, remained silent, as if they had been stricken dumb. Not one of all that multitude was heard to utter the accustomed cry."

This testimony to the sympathy of the people is given even more strongly by Father Coffin, who says: "None in all that multitude, and it was indeed a vast one, was to be found to respond *God save the king*, or *Amen* to the executioner's solemn proclamation, but all stood silent, as if they were without tongues and speechless. The people who, while that rod of iniquity, Elizabeth, reigned, were only furious against us, are now almost entirely favourable. For, animated with what spirit I know not, they praised these two martyrs with a common applause, and grieved over their death with so much feeling of humanity, that it seemed as if they had lost each his own friend or brother. And it was owing to their interference that the executioner was not allowed to carry out the full sentence on the martyrs, by cutting them down while still alive, and hacking them to pieces, as is customary, while the sufferers are still fully conscious."

It is, indeed, a striking testimony to the martyrs' winning and noble bearing, that although they insisted so bravely and uncompromisingly on the most unpopular and misunderstood of Catholic truths, they should have so completely gained the sympathies of the motley mob who came to see them die. May we not rather say that it was indeed that very boldness, which impelled them to speak so plainly, that impressed the people and struck them silent with an awe which reminds us of that dread silence which reigned around the gibbet of the King of martyrs? Surely there were many in that vast assembly who struck their breasts, and returned to the city in grief and consternation; surely there were some at least who murmured the words of the Centurion, "Truly this was a just man!"

It was already late, and nearly an hour after mid-day when the executioner cut the rope and took down the bodies of the martyrs. The severed heads were carried off to be exposed on London Bridge, according to the usual practice. Here they remained, and here the holy Spanish lady, Donna Luisa, would salute them as she passed along her way, reverently bowing her head, and saying, "Oh, how unseemly a place for such holy relics! God forgive this deluded people, who commit so great a sacrilege in the eyes of His Divine Majesty." She could not save those dear remains from profanation, but, to her unspeakable joy, it was otherwise with the rest of the sacred relics. The quarters of the martyrs were not exposed as usual on the gates of the city. Whether it were owing to the sympathy of the people, or for some other reason, it was decided to bury them at the place of execution.

About a hundred paces from the gibbet, on the high road, a large trench was dug, into which the quarters of the two martyrs were cast, and over them were thrown the

bodies of the sixteen criminals. This was done with the intention that as they had been persecuted and ill-used by wicked heretics during their lives, so their dead bodies should rest with those of evil-doers. But God had decided otherwise, and the poor mutilated bodies of His saints were to have more fitting sepulture. It was decided by their friends that at any risk an effort must be made to save the sacred relics. Dom Maurus Scott therefore appealed to Donna Luisa to help them in the holy work, by receiving the sacred relics into her house, the only place of shelter which was comparatively secure. That noble woman assented with the deepest joy, and it was decided that on the night of December 12, two days after the martyrdom, the attempt should be made. Donna Luisa was, indeed, warned by a priest that the matter, if discovered, would bring her into trouble with the Council, but little she cared for that. Her heroic soul courted danger and desired suffering.

Dom Robert Haddock was at the head of the little band of twelve pious and courageous Catholics, who left the city late that Wednesday night, to execute their perilous undertaking. Donna Luisa had made with her own hands the fine linen shrouds in which the sacred remains were to be wrapped, and she waited in an agony of suspense for the return of the party with their holy burden. She and her companions, prostrate in prayer in their Oratory, endured a martyrdom of anxiety, till at last the joyous sounds that heralded the longed-for arrival were heard at the gates of the house. When the carriage stopped at the door, she went in devout procession with her companions to meet the sacred relics. Twelve of them, wearing white veils and carrying lighted tapers in their hands, stood at the entrance of the house, and after venerating the holy treasure, conducted the brave bearers through the passages,

strewn with sweet-smelling flowers and decked with green branches, to the door of the Oratory. Tenderly, and with a mingled feeling of joy and sorrow, they deposited them on a couch before the door of the little Oratory, covered them over with a piece of new red silk, scattered flowers upon it, and then knelt around in silent prayer.* The rest of the night was spent in cleansing and embalming the sacred remains.

Thus, if our martyrs shared the cup of Christ in suffering amid malefactors, they too, like their Master, received the homage of tender love and devotion at their burial.

Unhappily, the brave little band of rescuers had not come off without mishap, and a portion of their treasure had fallen into the hands of the enemy. They had safely reached the ghastly scene of execution, and had set to their terrible task with heroic courage. It was a nauseous, horrible, and repulsive labour, but they endured it without shrinking, and after lifting up the decaying corpses of the sixteen felons, they found the mangled remains of the two martyrs, and began to carry them away in silent joy and triumph. It seems that the carriage had been left to wait at some distance off, and so they had to carry their burden to it. "Like victors, they divide the spoil" (to quote Father Coffin), "each one taking a part, one a hand, the other a leg; and so they set out on their return. But, unhappily, two of them fell into the hands of the watch, and were questioned as to who they were and whence they came. One of the two, struck with sudden fear, endeavoured to escape, but alas! in doing so he let fall the leg and thigh of the Venerable Father Roberts, which he was carrying

* The details of the procession are given by Luis Munoz in describing the recovery of the relics of Dom Maurus Scott and his companion, but we may be sure that Donna Luisa received the relics of one to whom she had such special devotion, with no less honour.

hidden under his cloak. The watchmen were at first struck with astonishment, but soon suspecting what was on hand, shouted to the man in the King's name to stop, if he valued his life. But he threw away his cloak and sword, and ran off at the top of his speed. The other man was taken, and was thrown into Newgate Prison, where, although he was but a catechumen, and not yet a Catholic, he could not be induced to betray his companions, or to seek pardon from the magistrate." It was not known, when Father Coffin wrote, what his fate would be.*

The severed leg was first exposed on Newgate, according to the barbarous custom; after which Dr George Abbot, Bishop of London, the martyr's unrelenting enemy, commanded it to be buried in St Saviour's Church, Southwark, to hinder the Catholics from recovering it. It was this Abbot who had stood with the greatest vehemency against the martyr at his trial, animating the judges against him, and doing all he could to prejudice his case. There was, indeed, no more bloodthirsty persecutor of Catholics than he, and he was soon rewarded for his zeal by being elevated to the See of Canterbury the following February. Thus it is that the Catholic, as he passes over London Bridge and gazes down at the fair Church of St Mary Overie (now called St Saviour's) by the river side, may remember that

* Here is Owen's account of this midnight translation :—

"His friends came in the night time, and digged him vp, and another Priest that was executed with him, and brought them both to *Holburne* to a Papist's house, where they did purpose to cut them into small pieces to make reliques of their flesh and bones; for the selfe-same night, some of the *Pursuivants* hauing bin abroad vpon some businesse, after mid-night meeting with two men in *Holburne*, not farre from *Chancery-lanes* end, whereof one they knew to bee a Papist, began to examine them, and asked them what they did vp so late? Whereupon one of them ran away, and escaped; and the other being taken, let one of Master *Roberts* legs fall doune to the ground from vnder his cloake; which fellow was afterwards brought to *Newgate*, and the leg buried in some secret place where the Papists knew not" (p. 95).

within these desecrated walls still rests a relic of the martyred monk, who died in the heroic struggle to win England back to the Faith.* Let him murmur a prayer as he passes, both for those who owe the happiness of possessing the Faith to the lives and deaths of men like our martyr, and for those who still lie in the outer darkness of heresy. Surely our martyr, now that he stands in the light of God's face, will not forget the flock for which he died.

The rest of the sacred relics were taken over to Douay. Donna Luisa wrote of them to the Marquesa de Caracena : "As I know your Excellency will sympathise in my happiness, I will not put off telling you that yesterday I deserved, or rather without deserving it, I had the honour of providing, for the second time, winding sheets (it made me think of our Lord's) for the two last martyrs. The first had been so soiled with the preparations for embalming bodies that it became necessary to change them. They have not therefore had a single thread upon them from any one but me, since the hour when they gloriously delivered themselves up to God. My unworthy hands consigned them to their shroud, and sewed the linen, which the English call holland when it is not of coarse texture. I wish it had been of cloth of gold, though, in the eyes of the Divine Mercy, what is offered to Him or to His own for His sake has the value of finest gold, which in His own good time He will repay with eternal rewards. The owners of the sacred deposit have carried it away, leaving me portions of the relics, in acknowledgment of the hospitality afforded them."

* Very different "martyrs" are honoured in St Saviour's now. The lady chapel is profaned by stained glass windows bearing the effigies and blasphemies of three Protestant preachers, who were there condemned for heresy in Queen Mary's reign.

At Douay it may easily be conceived with what joy and exaltation these glorious trophies were received. It was, however, only just that at least a portion of Dom John Roberts' relics should be given to his monastery at Compostella. An arm was therefore entrusted to the care of Dom William Johnson, our martyr's old companion at Valladolid and San Martino, who was to take it as a most precious treasure to present to the Abbot and community of the famous Abbey. Yepes recounts with much emotion how he saw with his own eyes and held in his hands this sacred relic, as Dom William passed by Valladolid on his way to Santiago. He begged a portion for the Abbey of San Benito, and succeeded in obtaining a large piece; for it was surely fitting that some memorial of the martyr should be left at Valladolid, in the house in which he first took refuge at the feet of Saint Benedict.

Thus London, Douay, Valladolid, Santiago shared between them the earthly remains of him who now prays for them in Heaven, as he had loved and laboured for them on earth. But alas! most of the treasure has since been lost through the troubles of evil times.

The principal part was preserved with great honour in the martyr's Priory of St Gregory until the French Revolution. They then disappeared, absorbed, like so many other sacred treasures, in that great maelstrom of sacrilege and violence. As far as we know, only one finger now remains, which is still preserved with reverent love by the Franciscan nuns of Taunton. A small particle of it lies before us as we write.

The arm at Santiago was lost, as we have already said, at the suppression of the Abbey of San Martino; though, perchance, not lost for ever.

We find an interesting mention of the relics in a letter from Dom Augustine Bradshaw to Mr More, the agent of

the English clergy at Rome. It is dated September 25, 1611.

He writes: "Likewise I pray you deal with him (*i.e.* the Benedictine Procurator) to procure leave for us to put upon our altars Father Roberts' and Mr Wilson's reliques, which we have in our house of Douay embalmed, and it would be a very great comfort unto us to have that leave, *saltem* that we may put them out *ad ornamentum altaris*. The council of Trent, sess. 25, num. 20, sheweth not difficill in this matter. Good sir, urge our procurator to do something in this."

Unhappily, we have not found what the result of this petition was. If conceded, it would have been an important testimony to the cultus paid to our martyrs from the very moment of their passion.

At the present time, of course, no public veneration can be paid to the memory or to the relics of this venerable servant of God. For that we must wait until the happy day so long desired, when the cause of our martyr shall have been decided at Rome, and authority shall have placed around his brows the aureole of beatification.

CHAPTER XIV.

POSTHUMOUS GLORY OF THE MARTYR.

THE martyrdom of so well-known a priest as Dom John Roberts could not fail to make a sensation among Catholics both at home and abroad. Their correspondence, or those fragments of it which have come down to us, reveal this sufficiently, to say nothing of the various minute accounts of the martyrdom which we have already detailed.

On January 5, 1611, the Archpriest Birkhead wrote a letter to his agent, Mr More, at Rome.* After mentioning the martyrdoms of Mr Cadwallador and Mr Napper, he continues: "Now I am to inform you of two more in London, towards the end of this past year. The one was Mr Roberts, a Benedictine monk, of the Congregation of Spain; the other was one Mr Somers, *alias* Wilson, who used London altogether. It is as hard for me to get the particulars of their deaths as it is for you there . . . (some words are indecipherable) such cowards, as no man almost dare adventure to help us. Yet I send you here inclosed such as hath been sent to me and withal for Farnese (?), a part of Mr Napper's shirt dipped in his blood, and a straw moistened with the blood of these two last, Mr Roberts and Mr Somers." In

* Westminster Archives, x. No. 2, p. 3.

a postscript he adds, "It hath been told me that in the arraignment of Mr Somers and Mr Roberts at Newgate, they had been saved, if it had not been for the Bishop of London, who urged the Recorder to do justice and to proceed against them: for he, being willing to put them off, offered them to consider upon the oath, and gave them three days for that end. But they affirming that they had considered of the oath to deny it, 'Lo!' saith Mr Abbot the Bishop, 'they will not take it; proceed in justice against them;' otherwise it is thought they had been reprieved. By this you see, that albeit they were indicted and condemned because they were made priests beyond the seas and came into England, yet the taking of the oath would have saved their lives. But they most stoutly stood to their Faith, and rather chose to die than to derogate anything from the authority which was given to St Peter and his successors."

From a letter of Robert Pett at Brussels to Thomas Morgan at Rome, dated January 14, we learn that five priests escaped out of Newgate, about the time of the martyrdom. This is, doubtless, the occasion of escape of which Luis Munoz wrote. The letter continues, "You may by this perceive that our harvest goeth now well forward in England, thanks unto our Blessed Saviour for the same." *

On January 31, Dr Smith, afterwards Bishop of Chalcedon, writes to More about the martyrdom, and the day before Dom Roberts' old friend, Edward Bennet, writes (under the *alias* of Farrington), saying that he has "a finger of our Mr Somers: I would Paul (the Pope) had it in his hand." † We think it is very probable that it is this finger

* Westminster Archives, x. 7, p. 17.

† *Ibid.* No. 12, p. 27, and No. 10, p. 23.

which is now in the possession of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

On March 3, Birkhead returns to the cruelty of Bishop Abbot, now raised to the Primatial See. "He is the sorest enemy that ever we had. . . . I think I shall send you word shortly of more (martyrdoms), for it is said that Abbot will have more blood, and one David Ringsheed by his means, they say, is to be executed for harbouring priests."

Indeed (although this martyrdom apparently did not take place), it would be difficult to exaggerate the blood-thirsty hatred which Abbot vowed to Catholics. When Dom Maurus Scott was martyred with a companion in 1612, he, like his spiritual father, seems to have owed his death principally to the fanatical fury of the Archbishop. A gentleman, apparently in the suite of the French Ambassador, writing to a friend of these last martyrs, adds, among other details—"*J'ai su depuis que l'archevêque de Cantorbéry et l'évêque de Londres s'estoyent mis à genoux devant le Roy pour empêcher qu'il leur donnait la vie. Ce sont des diables acharnés sur le sang des Catholiques.*" *

If the reader is inclined to feel scandalised at the strength of this language, he should study Abbot's correspondence, and see the lengths to which intolerance pushed this sour fanatic.

On the continent, the news of this fresh martyrdom created much sensation, and Dom Augustine had a life of his friend published at Douay without delay. It was written in French, and the reader has already made its acquaintance. It received the approbation of Dr George Colveneere S.T.P., Visitor and Censor of Books in the University of Douay, May 4, 1611. Many circumstances

* Written from London, June 26, 1612. Westminster Archives, xi. No. 97, p. 275.

of the life and death of the martyr were necessarily passed over in silence, we are told, on account of the danger which might arise to persons still living, if their connection with him were disclosed. Thus the name of Donna Luisa is not so much as mentioned. We do not know who wrote the book, unless, indeed, it be that referred to in the letter of Casaubon, which we are about to quote. It is now exceedingly rare; a copy is to be found, however, in the library of the Oratorian Fathers at Brompton.*

The publication of this book and the general indignation of Catholics seems to have made James I. uneasy; and he got his faithful henchman, Isaac Casaubon, to defend him. This famous French scholar, who had been commissioned to blacken the reputation of Father Henry Garnet, was in England in 1611, and received many marks of the royal favour.

He was made Prebendary of Canterbury, and the King and Archbishop Abbot stood sponsors for his child in November. Casaubon, however, was scarcely satisfied with his pension of £300 a year.†

Writing to the Jesuit Fronton-le-duc in July 1611, on the oath of allegiance, he continues:‡ “Add to which that the execution of this law is carried out with such slowness, with such mildness, and at such long intervals, that this alone ought to convince you that bloodshed has

* We give the title-page in full—

Discours et traicté véritable du martyre enduré à Londres en Angleterre, par le R. Père JEAN DE MERVINIA autrement dit ROBERTS. Religieux très-renommé de l'Ordre St Benoist de la Congregation d'Espagne, executé le 10 de Decembre, l'An 1610.

A DOUAY De l'imprimerie de LAURENT KELLAM à l'Ensigne de l'Agneau paschal, MDCXI.

The authority of the book is shown by the attestation of Dom Augustine Bradshaw, printed in chapter xi. p. 219.

† He has recently been “canonised” by Mark Pattison. “Isaac Casaubon 1559-1614” (Longmans, 1875).

‡ Casaubon, *Epistolæ*, Rotterdam, 1709, iii. Frontoni Ducæo *Epist.* DCCXXX.

been resorted to (if, indeed, at any time blood *has* been shed on this account) with the greatest unwillingness—nay, with the utmost grief and sorrow by the best of kings.

“How many who persisted obstinately in refusing the oath once, twice, and more frequently, have been condemned to exile instead of the severer penalty. Let that priest, Roberts be a witness, whose life has very frequently been spared by the king’s bounty, and once, indeed, at the prayer of his Excellency, D. Fabricius de la Boderie, ambassador of the most Christian King Henry IV., who begged it in his master’s name; but it was spared on that very condition that he should never return again to England; or that if he did return, he should know that he would have to pay the extreme penalty of the law without any hope of pardon whatsoever. Yet, in spite of his pledge given to the ministers of either king, he returned, and was found to be only the more hardened in his perversity; and so at last he had to pay satisfaction to the law which he had so often violated, together with another priest of like opinions and deserts.

“This is that Roberts who lately has been proclaimed, as I hear, a true and holy martyr, and has been canonized as such by the private authority of a certain Dominican, in a book just published over there.

“Though, indeed, I could not believe that such license would be given there to men whom superstition has rendered mad, and that such fictions could be published with impunity, had not the Most Serene King himself assured me that he had seen and read the book.”*

* Casaubon, writing to Charles Labbé, November 1611, complains that the King did nothing but read such books. “The king, great and learned as he is, is now so entirely taken up with one sort of book that he keeps his own mind and the minds of those about him occupied exclusively on

Casaubon had a perfect right to complain of our martyr's obstinacy in persisting on returning to England, in spite of the dangers which threatened him; but he had no right to insinuate that he had ever pledged his word not to return. To send a man out of the country, and tell him that if he returns he will lose his life, is not equivalent to exacting a pledge from him not to return.

Dom John Roberts steadily refused thus to betray the cause entrusted to him. The words of the Apostle rang ever in his ears, "Woe to me if I preach not the Gospel."

His panegyric as a noble martyr of Christ has been written by Bucelin both in his "Annals of the Benedictine Order,"* and in his Menology,† by Dom Clement Reyner in his "Apostolatus Benedictinus,"‡ by Dom Amandus Kayser in his "Liber Apertus,"§ as well as by the writers to whom we have frequently referred.

Dom Bucelin says that the Relics of this Venerable Father, as well as of other English martyrs, were permitted to be used in the consecration of altars, when those of canonized saints were not to be had. This permission was, however, given by Gregory XIII., and cannot therefore have special reference to our martyr. It is, nevertheless, a striking testimony to the veneration in which these glorious servants of God were held from the very beginning.

Dom Amandus Kayser has taken his account of our martyr from Bucelin, and for the most part quotes the

the one topic. Hardly a day passes in which some new pamphlet is not brought him, mostly written by Jesuits, on the martyrdom of *Saint Garnett*, the sufferings of the English Catholics, or matters of that description. All these things I have had to read and give my opinion upon."

* "Annales O.S.B.," anno 1610, part ii. p. 150 (Aug. Vindel. 1656. folio).

† "Menologium Benedictinum," 10 December, p. 841 (Valdkirchii Rhoetior. 1655. folio).

‡ "Apostolatus Benedictinus in Anglia," p. 247.

§ "Liber Apertus," by D. Amandus Kayser, Abbot of Tihany in Hungary, published in 1701. Oettinge. [This book, so rare that it might be called "Liber amissus," is to be found in the library of St Michael's Cathedral-Priory, Clehonger, near Hereford], vol. i., p. 7 and p. 336.

very words of the "Annals." His book is a collection of devout meditations, illustrated by "examples" taken from the lives of the Saints of the Order. He copies Bucelinus in two mistakes of fact, saying that the martyr was cut down and quartered "semivivus," and that he suffered with four other Catholics. He adds that the Dom John laboured so strenuously at the time of the plague, that he is specially to be honoured among all the religious who shared his charitable toils: and ends thus—"*Adeo veris Imitatoribus et discipulis Jesu, nihil dulcius esse potest quam ut digni habeantur pro nomine Jesu dulcissimo contumeliam carceres et mortem pati.*" *

Thus Spain, England, and distant Hungary unite in extolling the merits and renown of the servant of Christ. His was, as Father Coffin wrote, "an altogether splendid example of Christian charity, constancy, and fortitude," nor did God fail to reward his sacrifice by a harvest of conversions, the wheat which fell into the ground and died a single grain, sprang up again multiplied a hundred fold.

Yepes says of him that among all the religious who laboured in England, he may almost be considered the prince, both as regards the labour and the fruit of his Apostleship, and, after all, these panegyrics are but an echo of the encomium wrung from the lips of his bitterest foe: "Neither did he neglect his Lord and Master's business, but bestirred himself night and day in negotiating His affairs."

It but remains to see what steps the holy Church herself has taken to confirm this immemorial veneration and homage which Catholics have paid to our martyr.

* "So to the true imitators and disciples of Jesus, nothing can be sweeter than to be counted worthy to suffer reproach, prisons, and death for the most sweet name of Jesus."

In the year 1860, Cardinal Wiseman, of illustrious memory, Archbishop of Westminster, and the other Bishops of England, petitioned the Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX., of sacred memory, to institute for the whole of England a festival in honour of all holy martyrs, that is to say, even of those "who, though not yet declared to be such, have in later times, for their defence of the Catholic religion, and especially for asserting the authority of the Apostolic See, fallen by the hands of wicked men, and resisted unto blood." But to institute such a festival would be to contradict the traditions of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, by which a festival can only be instituted in regard of those servants of God whose *cultus* has been duly approved by the Apostolic authority. The petition was therefore refused. However, in these last years a new petition was presented by Cardinal Manning, the late illustrious Archbishop of Westminster, whose loss we deplore, and the other Bishops of England, together with the ordinary process, which had been drawn up in the Ecclesiastical Court of Westminster, and other authentic documents in which were contained the proofs, and the cause of martyrdom, as also the signs and miracles of 305 servants of God, who were put to death for the Catholic Faith. Among these was included the name of John Roberts, with fourteen other Benedictine monks, and several *confratres* of the Order.

After mature consideration by a special Commission appointed by our holy Father Leo XIII., the introduction of the cause of 261 servants of God was formally approved of. These martyrs (among whom is Dom John Roberts), are therefore declared "venerable servants of God," and if all proceeds well, will in due course be raised to the altars. Of the forty-four who were "delayed (*dilati*) till further proofs could be given, were, we may mention, six

Benedictines. These for the most part died in prison, and it was not considered sufficiently proved that their sufferings were the cause of their death. This decree was signed by our holy Father Leo XIII., December 9, 1886.

More than ten years have elapsed since then, but no one who knows anything of the mature and deliberate care by which the Holy See, in its wisdom, conducts such examinations, will wonder that the Cause of our martyrs has not meanwhile made many steps further towards the longed-for goal.

Meanwhile, we should add that those who privately invoke the martyrs to obtain any great grace or miracle should not turn to one or another of that glorious band, but should invoke them all; so that if the miracle be granted it may serve for the cause of the beatification of all. For in such cases as this, it is impossible to prove miracles for each member of so great a band of martyrs. Of course no public *cultus* may be paid them until their beatification. May God vouchsafe in His mercy to hasten that happy day, for the consolation of our afflicted Church!

And it is certain that among this white-robed army, which England has the glory of adding to the Catholic martyrology, there are none who touch our hearts so profoundly, or interest our imaginations so powerfully, as those who were not only the successors in mission, but the brothers in religion of our first Apostles.

Here we see the same black cowl covering the martyr of Tyburn, which of old appeared as the harbinger of peace and truth on the shores of Thanet. Here Augustine and Gregory seem to live again; here is the same spirit, the same joyous zeal, the same profound interior peace. A thousand years have passed since Ethelbert bent the knee to Augustine, and still the spirit of Augustine lives and breathes in these new heroes of the

Cross. The conversion of England is at once the dearest hope and the proudest boast of the Order of St Benedict; and wherever that glorious Patriarch numbers sons and disciples, there are hearts that beat faster at the name of England!

It is thus that one of the greatest glories of the Order, Dom Jean Mabillon, when writing of those marvels of monastic sanctity who made our land famous throughout Christendom as the Isle of Saints, was moved to lament over the contrast which the England of his day presented to the England of happier ages.

"Ah!" he cried, "if only Gregory and Augustine could live again and return to visit this land once more, with what sorrowful eyes would they see the fruits of their labours scattered to the winds, the stones of the sanctuary overthrown, the houses of prayer become houses of desolation and ruin! But indeed it is not the vast revenues of the Church whose loss we grieve for, nor do we Benedictines mourn for our monasteries ruined and destroyed, but we rather groan and lament because we see our brethren torn from the bosom of the Catholic Church and hardened in their schism. Would that by yielding up all those things that formerly were ours, we might win them back to us once more! Why should not the Church, why should not our Order willingly yield up earthly possessions that once were theirs, since Christ for our sakes became poor, that we might be enriched by His poverty?"* It was, indeed, in this spirit that the English Congregation of our Order, in the reign of James II., renounced formally all its claims to the cathedrals, monasteries, and possessions which belonged to it of old, and was content to begin again, poor and unaided, the mighty work of conversion, which

* "*Annales O.S.B.*," ix. 44.

Augustine and his companions had accomplished in a happier time. And as we have seen in the life we have been considering, far from clutching at gain or power, the Benedictine missionary only asked to sacrifice in this most glorious work himself and all he possessed, down to the last drop of his blood.

Dom John Roberts was but the pioneer and the organiser of a glorious band of monks, who counted not their lives dear that they might win souls for Christ, and who left the peaceful shelter of the cloister fired with that divine thirst for souls, which has ever been one of the characteristics of our Order, as of the Church of which it is the glory.

The work that our martyr did was indeed immense, but it was only a beginning. Who shall say when the hour of grace will dawn for England, and she return, as so many saints have prophesied she *will* return, to the bosom of the Church she has deserted so long, and outraged so cruelly? These are the secrets of God, but one thing we may venture in all humility to predict, and that is that this blessed hour, when at last it come, will be found to have been hastened by the labours and the prayers of the children of St Benedict.

Truly our martyr, like Dom Yepes, or Dom Mabillon, would have wept for joy could they have foreseen what we now see. St Benedict has now called his sons of many a different Congregation to labour in the vineyard of his love. Douay is still a home of Benedictine piety and learning; still from its hallowed walls go forth the labourers of the mission-field; still from the spot which is for ever fragrant with the memory of our martyr monks, rises up to Heaven the ceaseless incense wreaths of intercession for our land. Yet the sons of Dom Roberts have found another and a statelier home in the heart of Western

England, close to the holy isle of Avalon. Many a house beside, over the length and breadth of the land, is now called by the name, and filled by the children of the great monastic patriarch. Our England, once so cruel, so inhospitable, offering but a prison and a grave to the monk who dared approach her shores, has now become of all nations the most generous, the most hospitable, the most secure asylum for the monks and nuns whom a short-sighted and fanatical persecution drives away from other shores. Truly *hæc mutatio dexteræ Excelsi*; and may we not ascribe the wondrous change to the prayers and to the blood which plead to Heaven for the Divine vengeance of mercy, pardon, and healing? Deeply has our country sinned, and we cannot wonder if the expiation be long and weary; yet because of the graciousness of her latter deeds, may she not hope for mercy at the last?

Certain it is that He who will say at the dread Day of Assize to those blessed ones on His right hand, "I was a stranger and ye took Me in," will not fail to reward—and do we not see the signs of grace already around us?—a hospitality so enlightened, so ungrudging, and so gracious.

In each religious who finds a home among us England gains a new intercessor, while even among those who live far from her shores the charity she has shown to their brethren gives her a special claim to gratitude and prayer.

With all these grounds for hope, who dare despair of the final conversion of our country? Surely least of all the sons of St Benedict, who have such examples to animate their zeal, such intercessors in Heaven to render their labours fruitful!

Jesus convert England. Jesus have mercy on this country.

APPENDIX A.

CHRONOLOGY OF VEN. JOHN ROBERTS' LIFE.

BORN	1575-6
Went up to Oxford (matriculated Feb. 20) . . .	1595-6
Left Oxford (late in 1597 or beginning of 1598); studied at Furnival's Inn	1598
Left England, summer	1598
Entered the English College at Valladolid, Oct. 18 . .	1598
Left Valladolid between May and October . . .	1599
At San Martin, Compostella, "most part of four years"	1599-1602
Left Compostella, Dec. 26	1602
Visited Bordeaux, Paris, and St Omer, spring . .	1603
Arrived in England during April	1603
Taken at once, and banished, May 13	1603
Arrived at Douay, May 24	1603
Was in England very soon again.	
Was taken on the quay on his way to Spain, Lent . .	1604
After a few months released, and possibly paid a visit to Spain	1604-5
Taken and imprisoned, Nov. 5	1605
Reconciled F. Miles in Gatehouse prison, Lent . .	1606
Released and banished (from Gatehouse), July . .	1606
Went to Spain and then remained at Douay over a year	1606-1607
Returned to England, October	1607
Taken for the fourth time, Dec. 17	1607
Examined, sent to the Gatehouse, Dec. 21 . . .	1607

Escaped from the Gatehouse and lived privately about a year with Miles	1608
Was re-taken and sent to Gatehouse	(?) 1609
Removed from Gatehouse to Newgate, May 13	1609
Banished with Dom Broughton and others at the intercession of De la Boderie, French Ambassador	1609
Went to Spain (Sept. 13, 1609, Broughton, professed at Douay) and returned to Douay, but soon left again for England *	1609-10
Taken for the last time, Advent Sunday	1610
Tried, and condemned, Dec. 8	1610
Martyred, Dec. 10	1610

* It would appear that he was not in England by February 1610, but of the date of his return we know nothing certain.

APPENDIX B.

PEDIGREE OF THE MARTYR (*from Lewis Dwnn's "Heraldic Visitations of Wales," Llandovery, 1846, vol. ii. p. 215*).

"PLWYV Llanvrothen, y Parke, y Vaner Gymer.
Gwehelyth John Roberts, Esq^e.

"John Robts* 2 mab Robt ab Morys ab John ab
Mredd vide p. i. (G).

"John Robts, Anna v. Powl ab Diricke† Sercil of
Gildertar. Mam hono Elsbeth v. John Hanes of Hambro'.
Mam Powl Anne Veickle v. . . . of the ductom of Hol-
ston.‡ Mam Elsbth uchod Wepkei v. Marekws vam Low :

"Plant John Robt W^m mort, Elsbth = Morgan Branas
ap Wmphy ab Morgⁿ ab Robt, Blanch = Caddr Owen
Mr of Arts,§ Mary = Jaspr Gr^h, Jane =

"Arvau John Robts yw pais Gr ab Cynau || da ei defrans,
ar peisiau digwydd wrth briodasau teilwng in pâl; wrth
ei wraig yw az un ysgub wenith or, y crest yw yn Llew
S. pass^t yn dal pentan [*sic*] haiarn yn ei grafanke."

* His will is dated January 26, 1600.

† I have also seen him called "Powl Arderike Esq."

‡ The dukedom of Holstein.

§ Cadwaladr Owen was collated to the Rectory of Llanvechain in 1601, to the Vicarage of Llanbrynmair in 1608, and died in 1617. His son, Richard Owen, is stated to have "had some lands of inheritance in the parish of Trawsfynydd," and to have been presented to the Vicarage of Eltham in 1635. See Wood's "Athenæ Oxonienses," new ed. vol. iv. p. 84.

|| The armorial bearings attributed to Prince Griffith ap Cynan are, gules, three lions passant, argent; but the coat generally borne by his descendants is that of his son Owen Gwynedd, viz., vert, three eagles displayed in fess, or.

[TRANSLATION.]

"Parish of Llanvrothen, the Parke, the Vaner Gymer.

"Descent of John Roberts Esq^{re}. John Roberts 2nd son of Robert ab Morys ab John ab Meredith, vide p. 1.

"John Roberts' [mother (?) was] Anna daughter of Powl ab Diricke, Sercil of Gildertar. Her mother [was] Elsbeth daughter of John Hanes of Hambro.

"Paul's mother [was] Anne Veickle daughter of . . . of the dukedom of Holstein.

"The mother of the above Elsbeth [was] Wepkei, daughter of Markws vam Low [Marcus van Loo?].

"Children [of John Roberts Esq^{re}] John, Robert, Humphrey deceased, Elsbeth who married Morgan Branas ab Wmphy [Humphrey] ab Morgan ab Robert, Blanch who married Cadwaladr Owen, Master of Arts, Mary who married Jasper Griffith, Jane who married . . .

"The arms of John Roberts are the coat of Griffith ab Cynan, under its difference, and the coats accruing on worthy marriages in pale; by his wife they are azure, a garb [sheaf of wheat] or; the crest is a lion sable passant, holding an iron fire-back [*sic*] in his paw.

"Rec^d of John Roberts, merchant—5s. Dated the 20th day of October, anno R. R. Elsbeth 30, año Domini 1588."

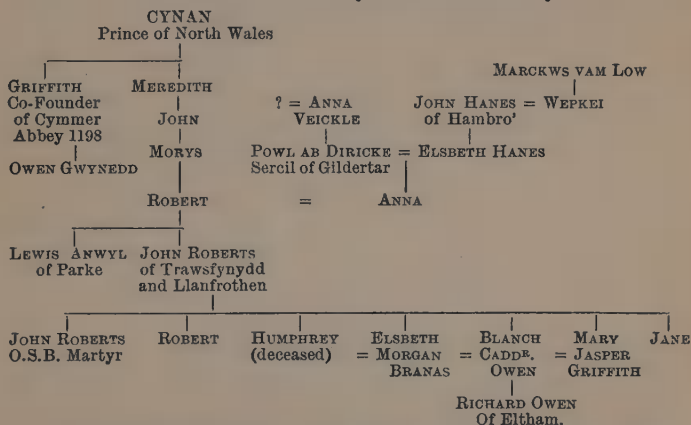
The pedigree, therefore, apparently ran as follows, unless indeed Anna Arderike was the mother of the martyr, and not the maternal grandmother. It is impossible to say which is the correct reading from the Welsh pedigree. If Anna was the wife and not the mother of John Roberts the elder, then her pedigree is fully given, while of her husband's on the maternal side we hear nothing. I therefore suppose (*salvo meliore judicio*) that the pedigree gives the descent of the martyr's father on both sides, and says nothing of his mother.* It gives, however, the arms of the

* In the text (p. 23) I have assumed Anna Arderike to have been the martyr's mother; but further consideration inclines me to think that I was wrong.

latter, azure, a garb or. The only family who have a right to these arms (according to the latest and biggest ordinary of British Armorial) is the illustrious house of Grosvenor, unless perhaps it be shared by the family of "Hazard."

As to the crest of the martyr's family, we may note that a very common crest among the Roberts' clan is a lion rampant guardant, holding a *sword* in dexter paw. Possibly the unknown word *pentan* may be a misprint for some word meaning a sword, unless it be for *pintan* a fire-dart, or *pentewyn* a fire-brand (see p. 25).

Y Vaner Gymer probably refers to the Cistercian Abbey of Vanner or Cymmer, founded in 1198 by Griffith and Meredith, Lords of Merioneth and sons of Cynan, Prince of North Wales.* It will be noted that John Roberts bore the arms of one of the founders, Prince Griffith ab Cynan, while he is descended from his brother Prince Meredith. The Abbey ruins may still be seen close to Llanelyd Bridge, near Dolgelley. As to the *Y Parke*, it may be noted that the elder brother of John Roberts senior was styled Lewis Anwyl of Parke.



* I take this opportunity of correcting a blunder made on page 22. Prince Owen Gwynedd was the son of Prince Griffith ap Cynan, not his grandfather.

APPENDIX C.

EXTRACT FROM THE "LIBER PRIMI EXAMINIS" OF STUDENTS
COMING TO ST ALBAN'S COLLEGE, VALLADOLID.

No. 121. *Joannes** *Bradshawe* venit ad hoc collegium, 21 Februarii (1596), natus in comitatu Worcestrensi parentibus honestæ conditionis, annum agens 19, missus Audomarum a patre Henrico Garnetto nostræ societatis; venit ad hoc collegium missus Audomaro cum aliis septem sociis, anno et die ut supra.

No. 129. *Joannes Jhonesius* venit huc 13 Decembris 1596, natus in comitatu Herefordiensi honestis parentibus et de fide catholica bene sentientibus, ipse habet modo annos 22, studuit Oxonii ubi erat collegialis in collegio Di Joannis per quinque annos, quorum duos impendit studiis philosophicis, alios tres Juri civili, ipse etiam semper corde catholicus, vixit in unitate ecclesiæ per sex menses, reconciliatus a Patre Joanne Garretio e societate Jesu a quo et huc missus est cum aliis duobus sociis et humillime petiit admitti in hoc collegium.

No. 140. *Robertus Knaresborough* venit ad hoc collegium, 30 die Octobris 1598, annum agens 16, natus est in

* Mr Bishop (*Downside Review*, xvi. p. 30) says his baptismal name was Thomas.

comitatu Eborensi parentibus honestæ conditionis et catholicis, et ipse semper vixit in unitate ecclesiæ catholicæ: emissus est ex Anglia quinque abhinc annis Audomaro, et litteris humanioribus, anno autem Hispali in rhetorica, se exercuit, unde huc missus admissus est die et anno supra scriptis, cum protestatione hoc ei in votis esse, ut ad arbitrium superiorum fiat sacerdos, propter desiderium quo flagrat spiritualibus Angliæ necessitatibus subveniendi.

No. 141. *Joannes Hutton* venit ad hoc collegium die et anno quo suprascriptus Robertus, annos habens viginti, honestis natus parentibus et catholicis qui per annos viginti carceribus multa passi gloriosam confessionem nomini Jesu ediderint, et mater in carcere defuncta est. Hic incepit studere grammaticæ in Anglia, et postea, quia propter persecutionem, sine detrimento animæ suæ reliqua studia prosequi nequierat, emissus est Audomaropolim, ubi per tres annos, et deinde Hispalim, ubi per alium annum studuit litteris humanioribus, veniens ad hoc collegium ex ordinatione superiorum, humiliter petiit admitti quo tandem sacerdos factus, Angliæ laboranti in spiritualibus bonis suppetias ferret.

Marcus Barkworth venit ad hoc collegium die 16 Decembris anni 1596, cum aliis quinque sociis a collegio Duacensi, unde pestem quæ ibi grassari incepit fugiens, Romam primo concessit, deinde huc cum literis commendatitiis Patris Alphonsi Agazzari, Rectis Collegii Anglorum Romæ, et Patris Cresuelli advolavit. Natus in provincia Lincolniensi honestis parentibus, agit annum fere vigesimum quartum. In Anglia studuit literis humanioribus deinde Duaci per annum et sex menses; vixit duobus annis in unitate ecclesiæ, Duaci per Doctorem Arosmith, Anglum reconciliatus: petiit humiliter admitti in hoc collegium, ut finem quem sibi præfixerat convertendi animas, comodius assequeretur.

*Inscription under the Portrait of Mark Barkworth in
the College Cloister.*

Pe *Marcos Barcworte* de la orden de San Benito, fué Colegial de este Colegio y volviendo á predicar la fe á Ynglaterra, fué atormentado, arrastrado, ahorcado y desquartizado por los heréjes en el año de 1601.

APPENDIX D.

(*Dom. James I. XVI. 9.*)

POINTS and names of persons discovered in the papers found in Percy's house.

A letter from Thos. Courtney to Mr Lambert in London, 5 Oct. last.

“Mr Some hath desyred that he might be admitted, and that you would take order for the receyving of some with you in Italye, because when we are gone there will be an ende otherwise, and for some other reasons.”

“There is a special friend of myne in prison at Yorke for his conscience called Mr Rich^d. Cholmley for whose delivery the Lo. of Shrewsbury wrote to the Bishop who answered none but the king shold release him; yet the Lo. of Shrewsbury said there was no lawe to keep him in prison, he paying two partes of his livinge. If you could procure to deal with some hungry Scott who wants 20 or 30£, or use means to the counsell table my Lord of Shrewsbury would doubtless favour it.”

The names of divers complices mentioned in this letter.	Mr Roberts Mr Adams Mr Soame Mr Jo Ewens The lady Pecham Sir Edward Pecham Mr Keynes Mr Sadler Gregory Cocke Richard Collens	Mr Philip Knygat (?) Mr Wryght The hoste of the Swan at Abersoch Mr Byfield Mr Preston Clement Cholmley Mr Tonstal at Montagu house Mr Woodruffe
--	---	---

In a letter from St
Malo directed to
7 October.

Mr Richard Browne at Mr Thomas
Knyghts a scrivener over against
Chancery Lanes end.

Mr Whyte
Mr Francis Nayler

Mr Henry Browne
Mr Hutton

Mr William Wyld Haberdasher in Ludgate Street at the
3 blackboyas a conveyor of letters.

George Neweman Josias Deevleigh (?)
Tho. Salinge.

(*Dom. James I. xvi. 10.*)

Points mentioned in the papers and letters found in
Pearcey's house likely to be the priest's Roberts which was
taken there.

"A report that Preston the Benedictine is great with
Bp of London and therefore to be taken heed of.

"The Jesuits gave out that the Benedictines persuaded
the pope that matters of religion go well with hope of
good in England, to make them odious to all Catholics,
and to thrust them into dangerous speeches against the
State by defending themselves from the imputation, and
by writing to Rome to publish the present state.

"That the Jesuits report also that the Benedictine
Worsley wrytes all things to the King of Spain and to the
pope, and that thereon the Catholics shold take heed of
him. An argument that the Jesuits and Catholics do not
hold themselves very confident nowadayes upon the K. of
Spain if they distrust those that gave him intelligence.
This Worsley is he that wrytes this letter.

"That the English Benedictines of Spayne are the only
men for the enterprise of England, having continual supply
of men and money, and have more lerninge than those of
Italy."

7 Oct. "This letter was written out of the North it seems about Cumberland, the 7 of October last, directed to Mr Hen. Browne *alias* Newewyne in London or Laurence Lambert from John Worsley, a Benedictine monk, there is also mentioned Roberts the priest, Mr Marmaduke and Mr Catricke."

10 Febr. "By a letter, to a Benedictine in February last, it seems that order hopes to restore the Romish religion in England, therein is this clause—*Spes in eo est qui Angliam a paganismo per vrōs conversam, iterum ab heresi restituet catholicæ Ecclesiæ.*"

5 Aug. "In a letter of the 5 of Aug. to Hen. Browne aforesaid he is willed to informe the ambassadors of Judge Sniggs (as he termeth it) bloody tyrannous butchering of all that come before him, and commends the glorious martyrdom of Mr Dacres man. This letter is not subscribed.

"In this letter are mentioned Mr Parker an assistant, father Holbey and Mr Hutton.

"In 2 Italian letters from the procurator general of the Jesuits of Rome and Florence to Fa. Augustine Englishman, he is willed with all speed and secrecy to repayre into England, about a matter of a high end, to meet with the priests in London, whose coming they expect with great desire, Feb. 12. I take this fa. Augustine to be Roberts and it may be it is he which by the name of Richd. Browne the Venetian Ambassador Molini sent to Venice to Guistiniani who is to succeed him here, as appeereth by both their passports to him, both in Maye and in October last, he having been twyce sent thither this yeare.

"Other matters of any note there is not in all those papers but only licences, indulgences, jubilyes, and such trumperye as priests use always to carry about them."

APPENDIX E.

LETTER FROM A PRISONER IN THE GATEHOUSE, TO DOM
JOHN ROBERTS, A CLOSE PRISONER IN THE SAME PLACE.

(*Dom. James I.* xviii. 10.)



JESUS MARIA.

"SR.—I have hard from ye partye who saith shee would be glade to heare two or three wordes because shee knoweth me not, as also for the kyndness with Sr A he told her that you confeased to him you wear P. yet nevertheless doth shee sollicit for your good. I expect by my messinger to hear some better answer to-daye: yf not I hope my discharge for I harde from the Bishopp yesternight (as also a check to the keeper for his base useg towards me) for I was forced to wryt to a privy councellor and have by his letter good hope of my delyverence; for I thanck I have tryed my friends and the help of Catholiques, for I mought starve were it not for protestantes: for newes here is a new conspiracie intended against the K. and my Lo. Salisbury, there is one Lasells of the Beddchamber comitted, and ther is most some 5 of them, 2 sick, 2 not in town, and the fifth wayting to perform the busyness. This is discovered by a letter found. The K. is sicke as report goeth. Besydes the Lord N. was examined on Saturday wher I here is no great matter against him, but things tryviale. My Lo.

of Devon seing Salisbery to insulte after some sort took part exceedingly with N. wher grew a heat between them. God send liberty to the afflicted, that dwell for the testimonie of Gods cause, and to avoyde prolixities I take my leave desyring your B. and prayers shall pass perpetually with my travayle.

“Your obedient,

“D. B.

“*Tuesday Morning.*”

[*This was enclosed in the following—Ibid. No. 11.*]

“Richard Barrett, prisoner in the gatehouse, to Thomas Ward, prisoner there, with a letter to a close prisoner in the house.

“Honest Tom Ward, I commend me heartily to all friends and to Mr Handey. I am sorry I have fayled in my promise, and resteth upon the negligence of the villainous boy, whom I expect to bring every hour. I pray delyver this to Mr Roberts with as much convenience as you can, and my commendacions, and so I take my leave.

“RICH. BARRETT.”

(12 Feb. 1605-6.)

(*Ibid.* No. 81.)

INTERROGATIONS OF D. BARRETT, PRISONER IN THE GATEHOUSE, AND HIS ANSWERS.

“*To whom is the letter directed which is here showed you, subscribed by D. B., but in the top signed with Jesus Maria?*

“The letter directed was to one Mr Roberts a gentⁿ. whom of some tyme I know about this town, but for my subscribing D. B. I have for this many years used it.

“ Who is the partie which you said would be glad to have 2 or 3 words from him to whom you write ?

“The partie in the second article is a gentlewoman by her name is Mrs Archer a stranger to my acquaintance which should have sent a matter of fortie shillings by the appointment of the aforesaid Roberts for my relief in extremitye.

“ What is the kindness which you received from Sir A. and who is this Sir A. ?

“The kindness betwixt Sir A who I take was Sir Anthony Ashley (as I have since better understood) I cannot signify unto your honour.

“ How do you know that shee was told by Sir A that the partie to whom you write was a p. and what signifieth this p. ?

“The messenger that came from her delyvered according to the tenor of my letter that he was a priest, though without my privity that he is one.”

[The rest of the paper is immaterial.]

APPENDIX F.

AUTOGRAPH LETTER OF THE VEN. JOHN ROBERTS, O.S.B.

I PRINT this letter, as it is the only one of the martyr's large correspondence that has come down to us, so far as I know. The examination (*see* Appendix G) is only a copy, but this letter is written and signed by the martyr himself. It is in the Record Office (Dom James I., xxii. 63), and is undated. It is addressed to Mr John Draycott of Draycott or Painsley in Staffordshire, a well-known Catholic gentleman, and a great sufferer for the Faith. Both he and Sir Edward Stanley of Wynewich, mentioned in the letter, were among the Recusants given over to Mr Levinston of the Bedchamber to make profit of. (*See* Tierney-Dodd, iv. p. lxxix). The writing of the letter is very illegible. But the subject is characteristic of the martyr, who was ever engaged in such works of charity. Doubtless the bearer was a convert of his own.

"To the right worshipful

his assured

good friend

Mr DRAYCOTT

the elder at Draycott

in Staffordshire.

"WORL. SIR

"It may please you for God's sake and mine to understand the estate of the bearer heerof and to

afford him the charity you do to all that are distressed. I take it all his ffreinds are wronge, and that by reason thereof he may be driven to harder exigency than the estate of his body now infirme and weake can beare. The courses he intended himself will acquainte you. I undertake there is not of a yonge man a subject upon whom you may shew more charity than towards him.

"Thus presuming upon yo^r religious and charitable consideration of the yonge man I take my leave still resting as obliged yours

JOHN ROBERTS.

"Sir Edward Stanley's are gone to
Einsam, and your man Richard
is with them."

[*This letter was probably written from the Gatehouse Prison
about June 1606.*]

APPENDIX G.

“*21st December* 1607.—The examination of John Roberts of Trausvenight, in the countie of Merionethe, aged about 33 years (as he saith) taken before the Reverend Father the Lord Bishop of London, Sir Edward Stanhop, Mr Dr Ferrand, and Mr Kempe.

“He saith that upon thursday last, vizt. xvijth day of this instant december he was taken by Humphrey Crosse one of his Majesty’s sworne messengers over against St Dunstons in Fleet Street. That about ten or eleven years ago he first went out of England unto Paris in France. Being demanded whether he took any orders beyond the seas? He confesseth that from Paris he went to Valadolid where he staid about five or six months, and thence went unto St James in Galicia where he spent the most part of four years in a monastery of the Benedictine monks called St Martins. But whether he took orders beyond sea or not (because he thinketh it prejudicial unto him) he doth not answer it but leaveth the same to proof. That returning out of Galicia he staid in Paris and in St Omers about half a year, and then came into England being about six year ago. Being demanded whether he continued at liberty

and unapprehended from the time of his said coming into England until the day of the discovery of the gunpowder treason? He saith that he thinketh it not convenient for him to answer thereunto. That upon the said day he was taken in the upper end of Holborn in the house of Thomas Pircie his first wife, and was then committed to the gatehouse by the L. L. from the counsell table. That he continued prisoner there for the space of nyne months and then was banished with the rest about August last was twelve months. That during this his second being beyond seas, he was at Doway, Paris, Valadolid, Salamanca, St James in Galicia, and returned through France and staid in Paris and Doway whence he came again into England about the beginning of October last. Being demanded why he presumed to return into England without the king's license? He saith that he knoweth the king to be merciful, and himself loyally affected to his majesty and therefore could not fear that so gracious a prince would do him any hurt.

"Being asked whether he did not know that his return was against the laws? He saith that many men do know much which they do not apply to their own particulars, but he knoweth it was against law for him to return into England.

"Being demanded whether he were sent by any manner of authority or otherwise into England? He saith he doth not think it safe for him to answer thereunto.

"Being showed the Oath of Allegiance 3 Jacobi cap. 4^{to} and required to take the said oath to testify his loyalty before mentioned, he desireth time to consider of it, because as far as he can see yet he cannot take it with a safe conscience.

"Being showed a Breviarium Romanum printed at Paris 1598, with two latin verses written in the first page of

the white paper at the beginning thereof, he saith that it is his book and was found about him at the time of his apprehension, and by him delivered to the Lord Bishop of London

“JOHN ROB'TS.”

Concordat cum originali { ROBERT CHRISTIAN
deputat. regrarii regis maj^{tie}.

APPENDIX H.

(WESTMINSTER ARCHIVES, VIII. P. 401.)

“REGULÆ observandæ a Patribus Ordinis S. Benedicti et Patribus Soc^{tis} Jesu ad eam quam inter Religiosos esse oportet concordiam conservandam ad cultus divini et fidei Catholicæ in regno Angliæ propagationem a SS^mo D^{ño} n^{ro} Paulo Papa V in Sacra Inquisitionis Congregatione ordinatæ x Dec. 1608.

“In primis præteritæ omnes discordiæ et amaritudines perpetua oblivione deleri debebunt, condonatis utrimque, maximo quo fieri potest, charitatis affectu, offensionibus quibusque quas sibi illatas fuisse causarentur.

“Patres Jesuitæ et observare debebunt ipsi, et ab alumnis suis observandas curare regulas illas quæ a SS^mo D^{ño} n^{ro} dum in minoribus esset stabilitæ, et a S^{te} Sua et a D^{ño} Cardinale Farnesio subscriptæ anno Jubilæi 1600, ac sub poena excommunicationis, aliisque a Reverendo Patre Generali imponendis: nec directe vel indirecte impediendum procurabunt alumnum aliquem de suis Collegiis, qui religionem S^{ti} Benedicti, aut alium Ordinem Religiosum ab hac Sancta Sede approbatum voluerit.

“Patres Benedictini, et alii Religiosi sub iisdem pœnis et censuris, non invitent aut adhortentur alumnum aliquem ex Collegiis Patrum Jesuitarum, ut Religionem ingredi-

antur, ne quidem sub oblatorum nomine. Imo tam ante quam post eorum admissionem omnia, præstent quæ propria cujusque Ordinis regula præcepit. Et in admit-tendis iis qui D. Benedicti habitum suscipere decreverint, observentur omnia sine ullo discrimine erga Anglos, et eos qui aliarum sunt nationum. Non liceat neque Patribus S. Benedicti neque Socijs ex iis qui religionem suam ingressi sunt aliquem in Angliam mittere, qui annum, aut annos novitiatus non expleverit, et omnes eas actiones perfecerit quas secundum constitutiones facere tenentur ii, qui in aliis nationibus Religioni suæ aggregati sunt. Neque Abbas aut Rector poterit ad beneplacitum suum in Angliam missionis morem facere, sine consensu Provincialis superioris aut Visitatoris, qui in provinciis erunt. Debent etiam rationem reddere missionum Illus-trissimis Protectoribus, quos etiam SS^mo D^{ño} n^{ro} referre oporteat.

“Attendant unanimiter conversioni animarum fugiendo quantum poterint familiaritatem eorum qui vel ipsimet præstiterunt vel alios adhortati sunt ad præstanda Regi Angliæ juramenta a Sua Sanctitate damnata, quive novas in posterum jurandi formulas proponent non reddita prius de illis Ill^{us} Protectoribus rationem. Politico Regni illius regimine non se ingerant, et si forte opera sua in rebus spectantibus beneficium aliquod animabus nasciturum cognosceret, superiores primum suos Angliæ viciniores certiores faciant, atque hi ad Ill^{mos} Protectores scribant, qui Sanctitati demum suæ omnia referent. Et in con-versionem hæreticorum et Catholicorum conservationem procurandam solummodo incumbant, majori qua fieri poterit concordia. Nemo eorum qui hic Romæ tam apud suam Beatitudinem, quam apud Sacram Congregationem negotia hæc de præteritis discordiis tractaverint, in Anglia sine licentia Sanctitatis suæ ire poterit. Scriptis autem

vel verbis non se mordeant, pungantve in genere aut in specie, sed de se mutuo cum omni modestia ac reverentia loquantur semper ac scribant.

“Si qua in re discordes fuerint, de ea Nuntios Suae Sanctitatis in Francia ac Belgio certiores faciant, aut certe Ill^{mos} Protectores, et quæ ab iis responsa et præscripta fuerint expectent, et prompte sine exacerbatione ulla animi, vera ac religiosa cum charitate exequantur.

“Memores sint obligationis suæ, qua S^{to} Officio denunciare tenentur omnes Anglos illos quos hæreticos esse cognoverint aut cum præjudicio fidei Catholicæ, cum hæreticis in Anglia, aut alibi commercia haberi, tantoque magis quanto solitum Congregationis secretum cognoscunt.

“Ex observantia et transgressione harum regularum deliberabit Sua Sanctitas quid fieri oportebit, circa revocationem confirmationem, aut translationem novi Conventus a Patribus Benedictinis Duaci erecti.

“Præcipit Sua Sanctitas sub pœna inobedientiæ et indignationis suæ, prædictis Patribus S^{ti} Benedicti, ac Soc^{tis} Jesu, ut regulas, et ordinationes suprascriptas observent, quas si violaverint, præter jam dictas, prohibebit Sua Sanctitas ne suos in Angliam Religiosos posthac mittant, et eos quos miserint revocabit.

“ Signatum,

“ L. CARDINALIS BLANCHETTUS,

“ P. CARDINALIS FARNESIUS, *Protector*,

“ ANTONIUS MAVINIUS,

“ *Secretarius de mandato.*

“ ALPHONSUS CARANDINUS, *Secretarius.*”

A supplement to this decree was issued by the Holy Office on April 23, 1609, laying down that as the Jesuits were forbidden under pain of excommunication to dissuade the seminarists from entering the Benedictine Order, so

the monks were forbidden under the same penalty to dissuade the same seminarists from becoming Jesuits, or from entering any other Order approved by the Church. It is printed in Tierney-Dodd, iv. Appendix p. ccxviii. An Italian version of the Latin document above is to be found in the Ambrosian Library at Milan (Cr. 202, no. 149), and has been printed with other documents concerning the Jesuits and Benedictines in England by Mr T. G. Law, in the *English Historical Review*, 16 Oct. 1889, p. 730. He says the clause prohibiting religious from meddling with the civil government is specially noteworthy, as the appellants in 1602 vainly tried to elicit such a prohibition from the Pope.

It is perhaps not surprising that this most impartial and wise decree was interpreted as a victory by either side. Dr Singleton, writing to Father Floyd, S.J., at Lisbon (April 9, 1609), says: "It may please you to understand that the Benedictines are bridled by certain rules, prescribed by his Holiness and Sacred Inquisition, how to proceed towards the scholars of the seminaries, and in England; which rules do much prohibit their contumacious proceedings hitherto. D. Anselmo, who was agent for them in Rome, is inhibited to go into England, or from Rome, without his Holiness' express licence. . . . This summer our Nuncius of Flanders goeth in progress, and intendeth to visit Douay Seminary, and the Benedictines' Monastery, upon which visitation and information, afterwards dependeth the Benedictines' removal or stay at Douay, as Mr Fitzherbert writeth to me."

On the other hand, the Benedictines seem to have been perfectly satisfied with the decision, though they not unnaturally objected to Dr Singleton's interpretation of it.

APPENDIX I.

(WESTMINSTER ARCHIVES, VIII. p. 479, NO. 99.)

From a long paper concerning the opposition raised against the establishment of the Benedictines at Douay, we extract a few lines which refer to the martyr.

“*March, 1608, SUBLACO.*

“D. Gregorio Estmond maketh relation of a letter read by Fa. Parsons publikely in the Colledg contayning false reports of fa. Roberts, and fa. White in England: as that fa. Roberts did frequent the bishop of London, and did joyne himself with the priests which are against Jesuits, also the sayd fa. Parsons speach of all other Religious; and of his equivocation in answearing his general about the same letters, also of other letters about the Benedictins which hee said hee would not read, because they were scandalous.”

.....
“1607, *June, DOWAY.*

“F. Austine writeth that D. Raphæle made fa. Persons aske him forgiveness for the calumnies spread against fa. Austine and fa. Roberts martyr.”

.....
“1605 [*sic*].

“Copia della lettera del R. D. Tomaso in risposta alla lettera scritta lui cerca le calonnie contenute in un altra lettera letta pubblicamente nel Collegio Inglese a Roma, contra il Padre Roberts, come se fosse persona contentiosa, et chi praticava, et era favorito del vescovo di Londra, et che alcuni preti fattiosi, cioe Cecil et Charnoc, et altri simili furono ammessa [*sic*] nella Religione Benedittina.”

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